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## BLOOD STOPPERS

by

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In the age of the atom bomb with its fanatical faith in natural causation, one scarcely expects to find vestigial belief in the occult and the supernatural—certainly not among the educated citizenry. Yet in Michigan's Northern Peninsula the Indians and immigrants have no exclusive ownership of marvel and mystery, for the native white stock widely accepts such inexplicable phenomena as blood-stopping, burn healing, wart charming, waterwitching, ill wishing, transmitted birthmarks, saints' miracles, premonitions, and specters.

One evening<sup>1</sup> I sat in a cafe in Munising with two Slovenian boys, listening to their tales of brutal and bizarre events. John Vesel described a knife fight in Shingleton between little Mike Bobic and six footer George White. On that evening they were both inebriated and a year's grudge flared out. Said George, "We're going to fight when we get done drinking this beer." Bobic went into the next room, which was partially blocked at the doorway by curtains. When White stooped to enter, and tried to brush aside the curtain, Bobic slashed him across the chest with a knife. Bleeding badly, White staggered half a block across the snow to Dolaski's Tavern. A few people inside saw him at the door and heard him holler "Help" faintly. "He had blood all over him—I seen him," said Vesel. "They drug him in and set him against the bar. The stream of blood had splotched all over the snow. They sent for a doctor in Munising, eight miles away, but they figgered he'd bleed to death before the doctor could come. An Indian, Archie Clark, who lives in Van Meer, happened to be there. He uttered a prayer and stopped the bleeding."

"How did he do that?" I asked. "Did he apply some herbs to the cuts?"

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<sup>1</sup> May 7, 1946. The material in this paper (which was originally read before the Michigan Folklore Society at Ann Arbor, March 21, 1947) was gathered while the writer held a Library of Congress fellowship for Studies in the History of American Civilization, April to September 1946.

"No, he never touched White. The prayer is passed from man to man in a family, unless a woman intercepts."

The next day I drove out to Shingleton, where a shingle mill had once operated and some two hundred people live now, to see persons whom Vesel and Fleck had told me knew the story. Emmet Clement, who owned the local gas station and had lived nearly fifty years in Shingleton, sneered when I inquired about two haunt tales the boys had told me. But he was more guarded on the White-Bobic fight and the question of bloodstopping. "You can stop blood with wasps' nests," he said. "Or touch a horse's wound with a wooden wedge, then drive it into the stump to stop the blood."

Next I spoke with Mr. Dolaski in his tavern. He too is Slovenian. "Yes," he said, "I saw Archie Clark stop the blood. White was lying on the floor right here, with a pillow under his head. The Indian just touched the wound, and mumbled a few words, and the bleeding stopped. It wasn't so wide, but it was bleeding a lot. When the doctor came, he asked how the bleeding stopped, and when they told him, he said, 'Oh, I see'." Dolaski then went on to explain the matter: that White was unconscious and couldn't resist the Indian's power of suggestion. "There are two minds, the objective and the subconscious or subjective. You're still living in your sleep, but your objective mind is at rest. If you could develop your subjective mind, you would have much more information. You don't learn from the outside—that's only what you see. All you know is inside. I knew a woman in Cleveland, Ohio, who could tell what you had in your pockets when she was fifteen feet away from you, blindfold. She's studied that twelve years." This psychic analysis by an unlettered saloonkeeper was the only attempt at a rational explanation of bloodstopping I was to receive.

Next I stopped at the tarpaper shack of Cal Wright, a two hundred and fifty pound oldtimer of the woods, who sat in the doorway completely blocking the entrance. He dismissed the haunt legends as mere childhood scare stories. But the bloodstopping was another matter. "I've heard Archie Clark say that a man could tell a woman the prayer, or a woman could tell a man, but that one man couldn't tell another." He pointed to a house across the way. "White went from that high-shingled house there to the beer tavern and just as he got there he fell. There were perhaps twelve or fifteen people in there. They sent for the doctor and the State Police, who took him to the hospital where he stayed six months. After that he went in the army, got married, and now lives in Pontiac. When Doctor

Shutz came he said, 'He ain't a-bleeding.' With all them wounds he would have bled to death you know. He had them stabbed right through."

Cal then began to tell me other instances of bloodstopping he knew. "I had a brother lived at Percy, four miles from here, Roy Wright. He had a tooth pulled and the bleeding wouldn't stop. He went back about noon and the dentist plugged it, but it didn't stop—he had to hold his head over a bucket. They fetched him down to my brother-in-law's here. There was a dance at Shingleton, and they went and asked this fellow Medley to come up; they knew he was one of those fellows could stop bleeding. He stopped a minute and looked at them and said, 'All right, I'll go, but it won't be bleeding when I get there.' And when he got there the bleeding had stopped, and it never started again. So there must be something to it some'eres."

"How long ago did this happen?" I asked Cal.

"About fourteen years ago. He was around twenty-two or three at the time. Somebody knew Medley and said, 'Go get him; he'll stop it.' And my brother was so weak he could hardly move his fingers. You couldn't make my brother believe no other way but that Medley stopped that blood."

As Cal's memory stirred further illustrations came to his mind. "The first time I heard about stopping blood was in Carr Settlement, Lake County, Michigan," he recollected. "I and my cousin were threshing wheat, and the bandcutter cut his hand. (They have self-feeders now, but used hand feeders then.) When he reached for the bundle, the bandcutter caught him with the knife, right across the back of the hand. We took him up to the house, tore up some sheets, and bound them to his hand, but we couldn't stop the bleeding. I started up the team to go for the doctor, and on the way I met an old feller named George MacDonald—the same name as George here [and Cal pointed to his neighbor who had meanwhile joined us]. He'd been helping thresh about there, and he asked, 'How is he?' I said, 'He's bleeding to death.' He said, 'He ain't a-bleedin' at all.' That kinda made me mad, so I said, 'Don't tell me that, I just come from there.' MacDonald said, 'You come along with me and I'll show ye he ain't a-bleedin' at all.' We went back, and Del was white as a sheet but he wasn't bleeding at all. It was seven miles to the doctor and I was sure he would bleed to death."

Old grizzled George MacDonald, who had come down to Michigan from the lumberwoods of Alberta County, now spoke up in a barely

audible voice. "I know two girls come to Drummond Island from Canerdy, claimed their father could do that. A man can learn a woman and a woman can learn a man. They do it with words that are learned out of the Bible. A fellow shoved a cork into a pop bottle, the gas burst the bottle and the glass cut the artery of his hand. He thought he'd bleed to death. I went and got the girl and she passed her hand over the cut and the bleeding stopped. Then in the night it started again, and she came and did it again, and it never bled again." In response to my questions George said that the man's name was Bill Johnson and the year was 1888.

Not through yet, Cal now remembered how his George MacDonald had a neighbor whose horses cut themselves to pieces on a barbed-wire fence. The neighbor, Dan Trumbauer, ran to George, who said, "You go back, I'll be there in a few minutes as soon as I get dressed. They ain't a-bleedin' at all." When Dan went back not a drop of blood was issuing from the horses' cuts. "He was a genuine Christian too," added Cal. "He could stop blood or the toothache. My folks always claimed that anyone had that power was born with a veil over his face."

I drove back to Munising and had supper at the Victoria Hotel, where I was staying. After the meal, boarding house fashion, the diners took seats in a room adjoining the dining room which also served as the hotel office, and I mentioned my afternoon findings, with some fear of ridicule. But Herm Manette, a youngish French Canadian with a serious manner, immediately corroborated the accounts. "I've seen this stopping the blood," he said. "This Bill Dory's dad in town here could do it. He worked in the printing office. He stopped the blood on a horse that went down and cut his front knee—old man Looshie's [Lucia's]. He told Looshie, 'If ever you're hurt, think of me.' The gift is handed down from man to woman and woman to man. We'd eat candy and get the toothache and go to him, and he'd say 'Go on, you haven't got the toothache.' And it would go away. You're not supposed to thank him or anything. If it acts too quickly some people die from the shock."

Alec Belfry, also Canadian French, owner of the hotel and father of two boys just returned from the service, declared with equal solemnity that his father-in-law had had the power. "One 18th of May I cut my ankle," he said. "I had on a brand new pair of boots. My father-in-law was skidding [logs], and I said to him, 'Jesus, I put the whole pit of the axe into my boot.' He asked, 'Can you walk?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'I'll split up the team and take you back.' The



old man walked in and looked at it. The shoe was full of blood. He said, 'Put some brown sugar on it.' That stopped the blood. He told me, 'When I'm an old man I must give that secret to my daughter.' But we got to living away from one another, he died at eighty-two in Newberry, and the secret was lost. He could stop toothache too. He got the secret from his mother."

Alec now was minded of another kind of healer. "August Caulier had the gift of drying up goiter," he said, in his slow, sincere way. "He was a switch engineer for the Isle Royale Mining Company, and I fired for him two years. The section foreman's daughter had a goiter hanging down to her chest. Finally he asked his permission to cure her without carving, for no charge. The foreman laughed. That evening he went to the girl's home, and every night after that, and ran his finger over the veins of the goiter. A couple of months after he started her neck was perfectly smooth."

The talk fell again on bloodstoppers, and explanations were offered as to the source of the gift. Mr. Belfry quoted old George Coty, a local bloodstopper, as saying that a passage in the Bible would tell one all about it—if one knew the passage. Herm Manette added that people born with veils over their faces, like tissue paper, which choked the babies and had to be cut off by the doctor, would receive the power at a certain age.

A group of out-of-town men working for the County Road Commission entered the room, having finished their dinner, and joined the conversation. Reuben Rowe, a burly ex-undersheriff from Calumet, whose parents had come to the Copper Country from Cornwall, knew of a healer from his county. "We had an old Frenchman up north could stop blood by seeing you or by having a person tell him that somebody was bleeding to death, whereupon he would mumble a few words. Whether it was Scriptural or whether he had sold himself to the devil, noone knew. He was the seventh son of the seventh son. He couldn't tell anyone or he would lose the power, until he was ready to pass out of the picture. I've seen him do it, in Mohawk, for a person suffering a very bad nosebleed after a very bad fight one day."

(Subsequently Miss Bessie Phillips of Eagle River, Keweenaw County, sent me the following information about a charmer and faith healer who in all probability is the person Rowe referred to.)

There lived a man by the name of John Buddo, a Frenchman, in Mohawk, Keeweenaw county, Michigan, who had the power to heal. He claimed to have been the seventh son of the seventh son and he

had the power to draw the pain from his patient to his own body, and in so doing he would perspire freely, his body would be all of a quiver and articles in the room would vibrate due to his emotions.

He could stop the flow of blood, toothache, nose bleeding, or stop pain in any part of the body. It was not always necessary for him to visit the home. If a toothache, he could cure that over the telephone. Oftimes someone would rush to his home to notify him that some member of the family had a terrific nose bleed and could not stop it. He would talk to the caller and while doing so would rub his hands over each other and in a few minutes he would say, "The bleeding has stopped," and upon their returning home found it had stopped at that same time he had said it would.

He is known to have cured such cases as Saint Vitus Dance which doctors could not seem to do much for. The party is now well and working and I never heard of it ever returning to her.

If he visited the patient he would just place his hand on the person while talking to him and thus seem to transfer the pain to himself. There are several people here whom he has cured of various aches and pains in the past.

His reward for his services was by donations. He could make a charge for his services and the medical doctors tried to have him stopped with his cures but he carried on; and as a joke by his friends he was known as Dr. Buddo.

By just talking over the telephone or to the party who called for him, he would come under a "Faithhealer" evidently, but when he visited the patient, a "Charmer".<sup>2</sup>

I walked across the street to the Piehl Hotel with Reub Rowe and Jim Hodge from Negaunee, also on the road crew, a Devonshireman who had worked as a carpenter in the mines and as a coroner. Jim proved a fluent story teller, and contributed this bloodstopping item. "Over in Idaho young McCann fell off a horse, and started to bleed through his nose and ears. Dr. Donovan came over and plugged him up. When the pressure built up, the bleeding started again. Mrs. McCann rushed in to her neighbor, who was my mother, and told her 'Eddie is going to bleed to death.' 'No, he is perfectly all right. Go back and see.' She went back and he was sitting up, and no blood flowing. I know that for an absolute fact," concluded Jim positively. "Dozens of times she stopped the bleeding."

A severe-looking stranger in the parlor had listened attentively to this account, but had made no comment and I felt some uneasiness

<sup>2</sup> Sent in a letter postmarked February 3, 1947.

at his probable contempt for our talk. He suddenly spoke up. "My aunt had that power in Appleton, Wisconsin. She was born with a veil."

Jim Hodge grew excited and confidential. "My mother could stop it just that quick," he said, and then added dramatically, "There's one right in this house that can do it!" Reuben Rowe caught on before I did and bellowed "You?" "Me," said Jim. "When Duba cut his hand, in Butte, making a wedge, and cut through the fleshy part of his thumb, I folded the skin back and told him it wouldn't bleed. I wrapped it in paper to keep the dirt out. He went to a doctor who said, 'That'll heal all right.' I've stopped my children, when they had nosebleed. My mother and grandmother were the same way. It's got to go from male to female to male. It went from my grandmother to my uncle to my mother to me. There's hardly a town in the United States but somebody has the ability to know what to say or do."

Reuben exploded. "Now wait a minute," he said, and expressed what I was thinking, "How far is this thing going to go? Why didn't you stop the blood when I cut my hand this afternoon?" Hodge did not attempt a reply, but when Rowe had gone upstairs he turned to me and said, "It wouldn't work on that fellow because he doesn't have belief."

My own thought on the matter was that Rowe's skepticism proceeded more from a little rivalry with Hodge than from actual disbelief. Earlier that evening he had told, under the spell of the confidential atmosphere bred by story exchanging, how he had moved from a haunted house. "Walking home with my wife in 1918," he declared to the group, "a big gray wolf appeared in front of me. I threw a rock at him—it disappeared. That night the house was tore apart—a pounding noise went through every room—when I chased it upstairs it went downstairs, when I went downstairs it went upstairs. I moved out bright and early the next day. The only thing we can account for it is that an old fellow who was living in that house previously had caused the death of his daughter through abuse. The next people moved out after six months and they tore the house down."

As Jim revealed himself as a bloodstopper he recalled this unusual incident. "I heard the miners tell of a man who stuck a pig in the throat. The pig started to bleed, then stopped. He turned around, looked at the group, spotted a man that had that belief, or faith—I wouldn't call it a power—and said to him, 'Jump across

that stream of water.' It was running in a ditch there. He did so and the pig started to bleed."

Later in the evening I wandered through town with Reub Rowe, and in a saloon I came again on the silent man who had said his aunt in Wisconsin could stop blood. I talked with him and he said his name was Jeff Corvette and hers was Jonas, and he began to narrate some of her powers. "She'd make lids jump on a cookstove just by holding her hands over it. She could make a table dance on the floor.

"She was the seventh daughter of the seventh daughter. She was born with a veil. She'd be about eighty now.

"A horse cut his fetlock on a barbed wire fence. Blood was running out the artery. She went in alone to the barn—no vet around for miles. When she came out the horse was fine.

"Her grandchild, nine years old, had a sty on his eye. She took her wedding ring out in the moonlight. In three days the sty was gone. She cured ringworm the same way.

"She could lift her grandson by the hair and swing him around. If you or I did it, he'd holler his head off.

"That's no goddamn lie."

That is what I learned about bloodstopping within the space of twenty-four hours. In the course of time, as I collected ethnic and occupational lore, many more accounts of bloodstoppers rolled in, always conforming to the same general patterns. In Munising still, I spoke with old Abe Artibee, whose son kept a fruit and candy store, and Abe recounted how six or seven years before when his daughter was bleeding to death and Dr. Sholis could not help, he had gone to Mrs. Chartrent, mother-in-law of Frank Chase the city marshal, and asked her to stop the bleeding, and she did. (He thought of her because she used the power on her son, Edward, janitor at the City Hall, when he cut his hand off chopping wood.) "I could have learned it from Rose Sweeney," he said, "fifty years ago in Cheboygan. Her brother and sister had the same power. I was moving hay with Frank Sweeney, when I was sixteen, and I fell into a ditch on a side-hill. Water in a spring made a ditch covered with a little sod. I had to untie the traces, and unhook the neckyoke from the mare—the neckyoke was bolted to the mowing machine pole. I had to lift hard to take the neckyoke strap from the neckpole. I unhooked the mare first, the horse wanted to follow her, he pulled up, and hit me in the nose with her foreleg. Frank seen me there bleeding so much. I used to have the nosebleed all the time, was afraid even to play. All at once the blood stopped. I never had the nosebleed since. He said,

'If you ever have the nosebleed again, think of me and it will stop.' It was the biggest miracle I had ever seen.

"Only Catholics have the power to do that. You've got to do a little penance after it too." This last statement contradicts the claims made to me by Finnish Lutherans and Cornish Methodists. But the Catholic acceptance of miracle presumably reinforces the belief in bloodstopping. Abe told me a miracle performed by Father Manion fifty-five years before, in Cheboygan in the Lower Peninsula, when he cursed away all the army worms into the Cheboygan River. "The worms rained on the ground from the air, and the ground for twenty miles square was alive with worms. So the people held a mass, and everyone paid ten cents, except one fellow who said the priests were only quack doctors; and the worms ate all his crops on the way to the river. They went hooplike into the river, and covered it like a velvet rug. They filled the whole twelve miles from the sorting gap to the paper mill at the foot of the rapids on Black River and they had to rake worms off the guards fending the logs from the sidewheels. And all the worms drowned in the river."

In L'Anse I met Bert Damour in a cafe, a chunky sixty-five year old French Canadian, a carpenter by trade when he worked, and brimming with memories of the old superstitions. But where Bert laughed at the stories about the loup-garou and the lutins and the fillolett, he spoke in dead earnest about faith healing. He remembered how he worked on a carpenter job in Lake Linden with a man named Beaudreille, chipping off shipblack sheeting from a scaffold, when his partner had cut himself with a handaxe. They lowered him to the ground and sent little Homer Berry to the bloodstopper, who told Berry the bleeding would soon be stopped—and when they reached Beaudreille, so it had. Bert remembered especially a burn healer, Louie Toine, "an old common laborer, big powerful feller," who would go out in the woods in the wintertime and chop wood. Some forty-five years ago, in Lake Linden, he had effected burn cures which Damour described with close detail (May 18, 21).

"My sister burned herself when she was scalding chickens and de potholder left go, and spill on her left hand, cook it from dat boiling water. Right away I went to old man Toine, 'cause he wasn't more 'n a block away. He was reading 'LaPresse,' and I said, 'My sister just burn her hand pretty bad, Mr. Toine, would you do something?' He said, 'Yes, go back and tell her she'll be all right in a short while.' Den I went back and he went up to his room to pray or whatever he done—I guess de old man was praying all right. When

I got home she started to feel a little better, and it didn't take fifteen to twenty minutes dat she didn't burn no more—she suffered, but she didn't burn no more.”

Bert had been personally treated by Louie Toine.

“Oh dat old man what he used to do, it was a miracle. I didn't believe it till he done it to me. We were making maple syrup from bark. Had a ten gallon kettle hanging from de cross-bar from two wooden crotches, over de fire, wid two guard-ropes to prevent it from swinging. Dere was a dog frightened by a cow in heat, de bull going after her, and he ran across de rope and knocked de business down, and splashed maple-bark water on my hand. I went to Toine and showed him my hand. It was burning terribly. I never had hard luck before. He said, ‘Sit down, you'll be all right, wait for me.’ Den he went upstairs. When he came back it was going along fine, and after ten, fifteen, twenty minutes I was all right.”

Subsequently other Canadian Frenchmen informed me about faith healing. After a long evening reminiscing (August 15), Joe Boyer, an old woodsman in Escanaba, astonished his daughter and son-in-law by admitting he possessed the power. “I can stop de blood,” he said proudly, in response to my question. “I got it from my sister. She got it from Alphonse Gaumont, my brother-in-law. I was splitting wood out in front of de house, and I cut de cord of my second toe—if my foot wasn't dirty I'd show you. How it was bleeding! I held it over a pail—thought I'd bleed to death. Then I suddenly thought of my brother-in-law, Alphonse, in Fall River, Massachusetts. A second later the bleeding stopped. And he wrote and asked me if anything happened.” Joe added that the prayer took about five minutes to say.

Boyer also told how he had relieved his four year old son through prayer. “My son Bob was taken to the hospital—he was suffering murder, the doctors didn't know what it was. And I prayed to get what he had. I woke up in the morning with rheumatism in my arms and legs—never had it before. And he was all right.”

At Lake Linden, on the porch of the oldtimers' little clubhouse, Wilfred Marcotte told me a burn-healing story (May 29). “Doc Remieur could stop burns pretty good. Doc used to say a little prayer. It wouldn't blister, would heal up fine. I used him once, when I burned both hands in the Calumet and Hecla boiler-house. I didn't have no gloves on. When I seen de steam come out, I dropped a handhole plate. I knowed dere was a liddle bit, but not so much as dat. De steam blistered my hands. Dey told me Doc was working for Jim Cawley at de surface. I ran up and told him about it. He said, ‘All



right, you go home, don't wash your hands or nothing—you won't suffer, I'll fix it up.' I slept good dat night; next morning de blisters was down; I was back at work in four days. De doctors would have taken de shears to de skin every day, and took about a mont'.

"Only de nint' boy in de family has dat gift. If dere's a girl in between it's no good."

Also at Lake Linden, which is still predominantly a French settlement, Madame Arthur LeBeault spiritedly described her husband's ability to stop the blood (August 28). "Not long ago Mrs. Thiboudeau had a nosebleed for three quarters of an hour. She called up my husband at home, and in five minutes it was stopped. My aunt gave him the gift a month before she died—three years ago. My husband doesn't have to see the person. He cured a person who was burned with gas without seeing her. A person called up from Detroit asking for my aunt to stop a bleeding there. A doctor had packed her nose but it didn't stop. She was afraid because a lake between here and Detroit might stop it, but it worked in no time."

Her daughter, Madame Alphonse Montambeau, added this statement. "Now I'll tell you something more. I had a fever in my leg, it burned two or three days, like fire, and I asked Madame LaRose to help me. She said she had never done it but she'd try. As soon as she got home my leg healed up. I didn't go to the doctor, because I knew he couldn't do anything for it. That was about three years ago. That same day Madame LaRose passed the secret to Monsieur LeBeault. She wrote it on a piece of paper and gave it to him. It's a short magic prayer."

Representatives from other stocks than the Canadian French add to the testimony. For the Irish it was Mrs. T. J. Murphy of Crystal Falls (August 21). "When I was a little girl living in Ishpeming, my mother was taken with a violent nosebleed. The doctor plugged up both nostrils but couldn't stop the flow. A friend said, 'Why don't you go get this man?' But she wouldn't. So the friend went and brought the man. He wrote down on a piece of paper her maiden name, her father's name, and her mother's maiden name. Then he put both his hands on her forehead. The blood stopped." ("My mother was very devout," added Mrs. Murphy.)

As a German spokesman, oldtimer Will Lehman of Menominee told me (June 10) how a healer had cured erysipelas, or St. Anthony's fire, with prayer, standing at a distance of twenty or thirty feet from the sufferer. She said "Oh," and felt a sudden pain which went away. "Burns, flowage of blood, colic in horses I've seen that

done," he said, and mentioned a woman who sent a rig thirty miles to Peshtigo Sugar Bush to get a man to cure erysipelas. "A man must learn the power from a woman, and a woman from a man. I learned it from a Peshtigo woman who learned it from the man who drove thirty miles." And so at the end of the session Will Lehman revealed himself as a bloodstopper.

After an address I gave in St. Paul, Minnesota, November 16, a Swedish lady, Linnea Osman, rushed up to me in some excitement and told me of the Tolv family, in Wedepad, Sweden, which as their name signified included twelve children, of whom the seventh son, Oscar, had the gift. When an eighteen year old girl, an unconfessed Baptist, cut herself washing windows in the Lutheran church, she went to Oscar and he stopped the blood. At Vulcan a Swede told me (June 13) his father in the Old Country could stop the blood from afar, if he knew in which direction the bleeding person lay—north or east.

A letter received from Carrow DeVries, a former Upper Peninsula and Detroit resident now living in Ligonier, Indiana, postmarked February 18, 1947, refers to an Amish man skilfull at stopping blood with the use of words. He stopped the bleeding for a mutual friend on the way home from the dentist where the friend had had all his teeth pulled. Dean Howard Rather of Michigan State College has told me of Amish bloodstopping in the Michigan "thumb" area, around Caseville and Bay Port (February 25, 1947).

The Upper Peninsula Finns, who like the Indian tribes possess a shamanistic heritage, produced their share of healers. Mrs. John T. Lehtonen of Negaunee, who came to Michigan from Finland at the age of twenty, told (May 15) of a woodchopper in east Finland who cut his foot with an axe; the group went to a bloodstopper a couple of kilometers away, who said, "Don't worry, he's all right." And just that moment the blood stopped. "My cousin's husband told me that," she said, and opined that he could use the power too. "He went over to the hospital in Negaunee to see a friend of his who was bleeding from his foot—the blood was pouring out, although it was bandaged. He told the fellow, 'It's all right.' They opened it up and the bleeding had stopped. He didn't say he did it, but I'm sure he did. I always wanted to talk to the fellow who was cured and ask if he knew how he was cured."

Mrs. Lehtonen had Mrs. Josephine Makela come to her house and relay Old Country lore, which she translated to me from the Finnish. Mrs. Makela's father had cured people in Siikainen without medicine,

by noita power—for instance, applying a heated knitting needle nine times to parts of the body pained by rickets; or hitting nine times with an axe on a doorsill through which a dead body had passed, on both sides of the hand of a person that was afflicted with cracking joints. The man with the sore wrist asks, "What are you doing?" The noita replies, "I am hitting the crackling noise." Mr. Rantanen stopped the blood too, with certain words which his daughter thought began "Stop blood stop", and included references to Mt. Ararat and Noah's Ark. He had stopped the blood flowing from an artery in the arm of an uncle cut in a knife fight.

It remained for the Finnish editor of the *Suometar*, the Finnish language magazine published in Hancock, to give me the prayer. In view of his background of travel and education, I had never expected to secure occult information from John Rantimäki, but he responded to my question instantaneously (Forest Lake, September 1). "A famous man in Viitasaari had the power to stop the blood, even over the telephone. He could stop it on animals. He had that in early youth, that power. It was coincidence the way it was found out. He was sympathizing with someone who was cut, and the blood stopped. He was in my time."

"An old woman told me that prayer in 1902," he commented further, "Miss Lisa Syrjala of the village of Torstila in the parish of Laihia. We were s'epherd poys taking care of the s'eeep. One of the poys punctured a vein, between his thumb and forefinger, and it started to bleed padly. He was cutting a piece of leather with a knife. I thought of the prayer and said it to myself—not out loud, because I was afraid the poys would laugh at me. It worked. I didn't tell them about it. I never told anyone the prayer, because they are s'ephtical." He then wrote down the "incantation" in my notebook, first in Finnish and then in English translation.

"Seisota veri, seisota veri! Niinkuin vesi Jordanissa, kun Kristus kastettiin."

"Stop, blood, stop, you blood. As the flow of river Jordan when Christ was baptized."<sup>3</sup>

NOTE: ("Family power" as known in Marion, Smyth County, Virginia, was described to me recently (March 12, 1947) by one of my graduate students, William A. Clebsch, an Episcopal chaplain, whose wife Betsy lived in Marion. He knew of three cases.)

(1) Tom "Tonto" Dolinger has power over warts, handed down—he "cured" Betsy's wart.

<sup>3</sup> Vance Randolph in his newly published *Ozark Superstitions* (Columbia University Press, 1947), gives data similar to mine in his chapter on "The Power Doctors," for one ethnic group, the old English.

(2) Hi Whisman has power over poison oak, learned from his grandmother. He can cure over the telephone. He asks the age of the person and the color of his mother's hair. Then he says, "Get some unbleached flour, put it on the poison oak at such and such a time, and I'll work my power—the words my grandmother taught me—at that time, and I'll g'arantee I'll cure it." He's known to cure people for miles and miles around. He's done it as far away as Norfolk, Roanoke, Bristol, Bluefield, even down in Carolina.

(3) Another family has cancer power. It's a secret formula. The only known ingredient is axle grease, and the only charge is for the ingredients. "Science" was down to see the family, but wouldn't tell the formula because they thought "Science" would overcharge for it. A friend of Judge Birchfield's was cured—"Pig" Buchanan. He had a big cancer on his cheek. Dr. Wright recommended an operation, but instead he went down into the valley and got the cancer cure. They spread it on his face—they won't do it if it's too near the eye—and told him to come back in three days for another treatment. It cured him. The cure is no good without the words they say.

Because of those three families Smyth County says they're better than Wythe County.

*Michigan State College*

## TEN OLD ENGLISH BALLADS IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE

by

Robert Leslie Mason

The Appalachian area, in recent years, has been the happy hunting ground of ballad collectors. Couched in the mountain coves, walled in by precipitous and wooded mountains, a family or a half dozen families lived, enjoyed, suffered, and sang. And in the songs they dwelt on a way of life of the past. Culture threads stretched all the way back to Scotland, England, Ireland, and even to Scandinavia, Denmark, and Germany. There, in the mountain coves, they sang of lords, ladies, and people of high estate—far cry from the isolated lives they lived. They sang of betrayed love and union in death.

The folk singer sang to his children, to his wife, to his sweetheart, to his neighbor, to himself, and to the clouds and trees. He remembered no author, nor did he try to. The song belonged as much to him as to the first man who sang it. He modified, he shaped the ballad, and he was his own authority for it.

Indeed, if one accepts the communal theory of authorship, authentic composition still went on when the folk singer varied a word, line, or deed.<sup>1</sup>

Every folk singer is, in a sense, a folk poet, since he does alter and mold the material he sings.

Goethe wrote:

The special value, of what we call . . . ballads, is that their inspiration comes fresh from nature; they are never got up, they flow from a sure spring . . . The unsophisticated man is more than the master of direct, effective expression in few words than he who has received a regular literary education.<sup>2</sup>

Ballad singing suffered by the invention of printing (as, later, by the inventions of the phonograph and radio) and, in England, received the cruelest blow of all when Queen Elizabeth forbade it and classed the professional minstrel with rogues, vagabonds, and beggars. But it was in England also that the romantic ballad had its revival and was introduced to an entirely new phase of existence.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of individual *versus* communal authorship see Louise Pound, *Poetic Origins of the Ballad* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco, *The Study of Folk-Songs* ("Everyman's Library"; London: J. M. Dent and Sons, n. d.), p. 3.

The publication of Bishop Percy's *Reliques*, in 1765, started the modern period in which popular ballads were not only accepted as literature, but were to exercise the strongest influence in lettered poets from Goethe and Scott to the present time.<sup>3</sup>

In Cannon County, Tennessee, the writer has found ten distinct traditional ballads. These ballads were written down from people who knew and sang or recited them, remembering that their parents or a neighbor had taught them the ballads when they were children. The ten ballads are: "Lord Randal"; "Lord Thomas"; "Lord Lovel"; "Who's Gonna Shoe Your Little Foot?"; "The House Carpenter"; "Hangman, Hangman, Hold Your Rope"; "Cross-Eyed David"; "Barbara Allen"; "The Farmer's Curst Wife"; and "Chevy Chase."

### LORD RANDAL

"Oh where have you been, Lord Randal, my son?

And where have you been, my darling one?"

"I have been to the greenwood; Mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm wearied with hunting and fain would lie down."

"And who met you there, Lord Randal, my son?

And who met you there, my darling one?"

"Oh I met with my true love; Mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm wearied with hunting and fain would lie down."

"And what did she give you, Lord Randal, my son?

And what did she give you, my darling one?"

"Eels fried in a pan; Mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart and fain would lie down."

"What do you will to your father, Lord Randal, my son?

What do you will to your father, my darling one?"

"My horse and my saddle; Mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart and fain would lie down."

"What do you will to your brother, Lord Randal, my son?

What do you will to your brother, my darling one?"

"My dogs and my gun; Mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart and fain would lie down."

"What do you will to your sister, Lord Randal, my son?

What do you will to your sister, my darling one?"

"My books and my pictures; Mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart and fain would lie down."

"What do you will to your sweetheart, Lord Randal, my son?

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



What do you will to your sweetheart, my darling one?"  
 "Six cords of green white-oak to bake her bones brown,  
 For I fear I am dying and fain would lie down."

"Lord Randal" was sung by Mrs. Dema Bowen of the community of Geedville, adding that she had learned it from her father nearly fifty years ago. It is possible to trace the ballad back about a century and a half to England and was probably there long before that. It has been popular in Italy for three hundred years.<sup>4</sup>

The above version is closest in resemblance to version A of Child ballad 22, but the Child ballad contains two more stanzas. In both versions a young man has visited his sweetheart who fed him "eels fried in a pan." In the Child version the mother asks, "Wha gat your leavins?" Lord Randal tells her his hawks and hounds ate and died of the fried eels, whereupon the mother realizes her son is poisoned. The Cannon County ballad is more direct and compact. The mother suspects the cause of her son's illness from the start and asks her son what he leaves to his father, brother, sister, and sweetheart. To the last question he answers, "Six cords of green white-oak to bake her bones brown." The Child version says, "leave her hell and fire."

Versions found in Italy tell the same story in the same conventional pattern of question and answer, differing somewhat in detail of story and phraseology. "I gat eels broil'd in broo," Lord Randal says to his mother, and the swelling and death of his hounds testify to the poisoning.<sup>5</sup>

The bequest device is common in all of the versions of "Lord Randal," resembling, in that way, the Portuguese ballad of "Helena," a story of a husband who realizes the faithfulness of his wife too late. As she dies she bequeathes her valuables to relatives, and finally her son to her mother-in-law, who has betrayed her. "Not to that dog," cries her husband. "Leave him rather to thy mother."

Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco says:

It is not so easy to decide whether the victim was originally a child or a lover, whether the north or south Europe has preserved the more correct version. Some crime of the middle ages may have been the foundation of the ballad; on the other hand it is conceivable that it formed a part of the enormous accumulation of literary odds and ends brought to Europe from the east, by pilgrims and crusaders.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Francis Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Cambridge Edition; New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904), p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-176.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

## LORD THOMAS

Lord Thomas he had two sweethearts fair,  
Lord Thomas he loved fair Eleanor best,  
But his mother loved the Brown, Brown, Brown,  
But his mother loved the Brown.

"The Brown Girl she has houses and lands,  
Fair Eleanor she has none."  
"If you will listen to my advice,  
You'll bring the Brown Girl home, home, home,  
You will bring the Brown Girl home."

Lord Thomas he rode to Fair Eleanor's hall,  
He jingled at the ring,  
And none so ready as Fair Eleanor herself;  
She rose and let him in,  
She rose and let him in.

"Good news, good news, Fair Eleanor," he said,  
Good news I've brought to you;  
I've come to ask you to my wedding,  
For married I must be,  
For married I must be."

"Bad news, bad news, Lord Thomas," she said,  
"Bad news you've brought to me;  
You've come to ask me to your wedding,  
For married you must be,  
For married you must be."

She rode till she got to Lord Thomas's hall,  
She jingled at the ring,  
And none so ready as Lord Thomas himself;  
He rose and let her in,  
He rose and let her in.

"Lord Thomas, Lord Thomas, is this your bride  
That looks so wonderful brown,  
When you once could have gotten the fairest young lady  
That ever walked on ground?  
That ever walked on ground?"

The Brown Girl had a little pen-knife,  
It was both keen and sharp;  
Betwixt the long rib and the short,  
She pierced Fair Eleanor's heart,  
She pierced Fair Eleanor's heart.

"Lord Thomas, Lord Thomas, are you blind,  
Or can't you very well see,  
And can't you see my own heart's blood  
Come trinkling down my knee?  
Come trinkling down my knee?"

Lord Thomas he took her little brown hand  
And led her through the hall,  
And with a sword cut off her head  
And threw it against the wall, the wall,  
And threw it against the wall.

He threw the sword upon the floor;  
It flew into his breast.  
Here lie three lovers all along in a row,  
Lord send their souls to rest,  
Lord send their souls to rest.

"Oh Mother, oh Mother, go dig my grave,  
Go dig it long and deep,  
And bury Fair Eleanor in my arms  
And the Brown girl at my feet, my feet,  
And the Brown Girl at my feet."

Mrs. Dema Bowen sang "Lord Thomas" after some effort at recalling the tune. "I don't sing many old songs now," she said. "Radio has come in and I have to keep up with all the hits."

The ballad is traditional in Scotland and Ireland. It was known to Samuel Pepys. The version extant in Cannon County resembles somewhat Child ballad 73 in phraseology and details. In general, all versions tell the same tale.

It is interesting to note the refrain, or repetition of the last line, which occurs in each stanza of this ballad as well as in many other old English ballads. It probably indicates the group once participated in ballad singing. It may be that the folk singer carried the first three lines and the group joined in the refrain. If so, the presence of the refrain in extant ballads is a definite relic of a past culture, though not generally recognized as such. George Lyman Kittredge has this to say concerning the importance of the refrain:

... the refrain, which, though its history is one of the obscurest chapters of literature and art, is manifestly a point of connection between the ballad and the throng. The refrain can never have been the invention of the solitary, brooding author of our modern conditions. It presupposes a crowd of singers and dancers. Accordingly, as ballads get farther and farther away from the people or from singing, they tend

to lose their refrains; the recited ballad had no need of them.' Francis Gummere says that

Ballads . . . always had a refrain; the refrain is incontestably sprung from singing of the people at dance, play, work, going back to that choral repetition which seems to have been the protoplasm of all poetry.<sup>8</sup>

In many instances the refrain in old ballads resembles that of the chorus of the Greek play. Further, conversation in old ballads may be a result of choral origin. Questions and answers also advance the plot of the ballad until the climax is reached, a conventional device widely adopted wherever ballads are sung.

The old Greek chorus appeared on the stage to give interpretation of the characters of the drama. In the festal song, or in the dance of the primitive man, questions were asked by one and answered by another; or one composed a stanza which must be matched by another.<sup>9</sup>

### Lord Lovel

Lord Lov-el he stood at the cas-tle gate

a- comb-ing his milk white steed,

When There came La-dy Nan-cy Brown

a- wishing her lov-er God speed, God speed,

a- wishing her lov-er God speed.

<sup>7</sup> George Lyman Kittredge, "Introduction" to Francis Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Cambridge Edition; New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904), p. xx.

<sup>8</sup> Francis Gummere, *The Popular Ballad* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1907), pp. 73-74.

<sup>9</sup> Madison Hall, *The Influence of Percy's Reliques Upon Later Ballad Writers*, Louisiana Polytechnic Institute Bulletin, XXXI, No. 4 (1933), 13.

## LORD LOVEL

Lord Lovel he stood at the castle gate  
 A-combing his milk-white steed,  
 When there came Lady Nancy Brown  
 A-wishing her lover God speed, God speed,  
 A-wishing her lover God speed.

Lord Lovel he traveled to a distant land;  
 Strange faces he did see,  
 And many a fair maiden he did behold,  
 But none as fair as Nancy, Nancy,  
 But none as fair as Nancy.

He mounted and rode on his milk-white steed,  
 And rode till he came to town;  
 And there he heard the death bell toll  
 And the people all gathered around, around,  
 And the people all gathered around.

"Oh who is dead?" Lord Lovel he said,  
 "Oh who is dead?" said he;  
 "Miss Nancy Brown, the flower of the town,  
 And she was your loving Nancy, Nancy,  
 And she was your loving Nancy."

"Go dig my grave," Lord Lovel he said,  
 "Go dig my grave," said he;  
 "And let me bid this world adieu  
 And go with my loving Nancy, Nancy,  
 And go with my loving Nancy."

Lady Nancy was buried in the old churchyard,  
 Lord Lovel was buried close by her;  
 And out of her grave grew a red, red rose,  
 And out of Lord Lovel's a briar, a briar,  
 And out of Lord Lovel's a briar.

They grew and grew to the old church top,  
 Till they could grow no higher;  
 And there they tied in a true lover's knot,  
 The rose clung 'round the briar, the briar,  
 The rose clung 'round the briar.

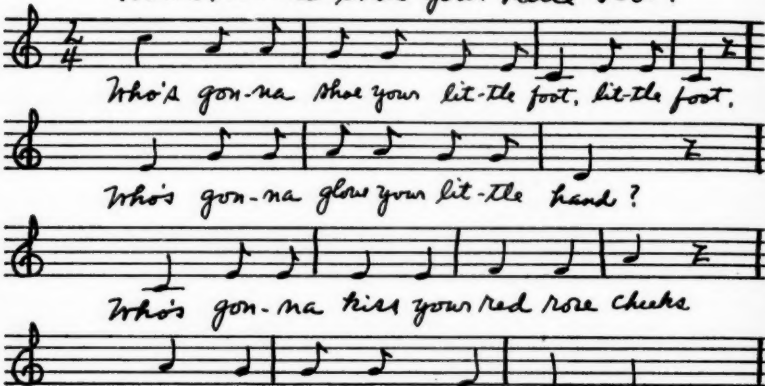
"I hadn't thought of 'Lord Lovel' for twenty years," said Mrs. Dema Bowen. "Jim, my husband, used to sing it to Beecher when he rocked him in the cradle, but since the last baby Jim ain't sung any more."

There are those who would count themselves fortunate to have had "Lord Lovel" sung at the cradle. Nonchalant Beecher thinks

nothing of it. Mrs. Bowen, in spite of her remarkable memory, could think of no more than one stanza at first, then gave it up and went to bed. Fifteen minutes after midnight she thought of the rest and got up to write it down.

The Cannon County version has only seven stanzas. All Child versions have more, version B, which is closest to the Cannon County version, having more than a dozen stanzas. There are several sets of these ballads in Scandinavia.<sup>10</sup>

*Who's Gonna Shoe your Little Foot?*



*Who's gon-na shoe your lit-tle foot, lit-tle foot,*

*Who's gon-na glove your lit-tle hand?*

*Who's gon-na kiss your red rose cheeks*

*When I'm in a for-sign land?*

#### WHO'S GONNA SHOE YOUR LITTLE FOOT?

Who's gonna shoe your little foot, little foot,  
 Who's gonna glove your little hand?  
 Who's gonna kiss your red rose cheeks  
 When I'm in a foreign land?

My father will shoe my little foot, little foot,  
 My mother will glove my little hand,  
 And you can kiss my red rose cheeks  
 When you return again.

These two stanzas usually stand alone in Cannon County, although the writer has found them grafted to other ballads. The fragment is from an old ballad, "The Lass of Roch Royal," and was sung by Mrs. Jennie Mason of Stone's River Road. The story of the ballad

<sup>10</sup> Child, *op. cit.*, p. 159.



is obscure even in the Child version. Ballad 76 tells the vague story of a young woman, Fair Isabell, who seeks the father of her unborn child. She "tirls at the pin" of Love [sic] Gregory's castle. Gregory answers from within and asks for some love tokens which have passed between them as proof of her identity. She tells him of three. Gregory then replies:

"Love Gregory, he is not at home,  
But he is to the sea;"

At her wit's end, the lass cries:

"O who will shoe my bony foot?  
Or who will glove my hand?  
Or who will bind my middle gimp  
With the broad lily band?  
Or who will comb my bony head  
With the red river comb?  
Or who will be my bairn's father  
Ere Gregory he come home?"

Apparently Gregory promises to do everything except be the "bairn's father." The rest of the ballad seems to assume that Gregory's mother lied to the lass while her son was asleep. Upon awakening, Gregory says:

"I dreamed a dream now since yestreen,  
That I never dreamed before;  
I dreamed that the lass of Rochroyall [sic]  
Was knocking at my door."

He learns the truth, curses his mother, and orders:

"Go saddle me the swiftest steed  
That ever rode this town."

A mile away he sees the corpse of the lass of Roch Royal. He orders her cold face bared and kisses her chin and her cheek. As he does so, he announces his own approaching death. The two are buried side by side, a "birk" and a "bryar" entwining, again uniting love in death.

#### THE HOUSE CARPENTER

"We've met, we've met, my own true love,  
We've met at last," said he;  
"I have just returned from the salt, salt sea,  
All for the sake of thee.

"I could have married a king's daughter fair,  
She promised marriage to me,  
But I refused rich crowns of gold,  
All for the sake of thee."

"If you could have married a king's daughter fair,  
I'm sure you were to blame;  
For I've lately married a house carpenter,  
And I think he's a fine young man."

"Will you forsake your house carpenter  
And go along with me?  
I'll carry you where the green grass grows  
Across the salt, salt sea."

She dressed herself in a raiment of pearl  
Most glorious to behold,  
And as she walked through the streets  
Outshone the glittering gold.

She picked up her dear little babe,  
The kisses she gave it three,  
Saying, "Stay here, my dear little babe,  
Keep your daddy company."

They hadn't been aboard but about two weeks,  
I'm sure it was not three,  
Till she began to sigh and weep;  
She wept most bitterly.

And he said, "Are you weeping for your silver and gold,  
Are you weeping for me?  
Are you weeping for your house carpenter  
That you never more will see?"

"I'm not weeping for silver and gold,  
I'm not weeping for thee;  
I'm only weeping for my husband and babe  
That I never more will see."

They hadn't been aboard but about three weeks,  
I'm sure it was not four,  
Till in the ship there sprang a leak  
And weeping was heard no more.

Mrs. Dema Bowen recited the above ballad, after discovering she had forgotten the tune. It is a version of the old, old ballad called "The Daemon Lover." The demon angle, heaven and hell on the high mountain tops and in the chasm of the sea, have vanished.

Child ballad 243, with the same tautological title, tells of a weird seaman who returns to claim his sweetheart whom he left seven years ago. Version F describes the change of the seaman's feet to cloven hoofs. She looks at them in horror. Then, far, far, high in the sky she sees the most beautiful hills. "What place is that?" she asks. "That is heaven, where you never will go," the demon informs her. Away in the distance, in the bosom of the sea, she sees a dreary mountain:

"O whaten a mountain is yon," she said,  
All so dreary wi' frost and snow?"  
"O yon is the mountain of hell," he cried,  
Where you and I will go."

The demon strikes upon the ship; it breaks in two, and sinks into the sea.

#### HANGMAN, HANGMAN, HOLD YOUR ROPE

"Hangman, hangman, hold your rope,  
Hold your rope for awhile;  
I think I see my mother a-coming,  
She's come for many a mile.

"Mother, O Mother, have you brought me gold,  
Gold for to set me free?  
Or have you come to see me hanged,  
Hanged on the gallows tree."

"No, I've not come to bring ye gold,  
Gold for to set ye free,  
But I have come to see ye hanged,  
Hanged on the gallows tree."

"Hangman, hangman, hold your rope,  
Hold your rope for awhile;  
I think I see my father a-coming,  
He's rode for many a mile.

"Father, O Father, have you brought me gold,  
Gold for to set me free?  
Or have you come to see me hanged,  
Hanged on the gallows tree?"

"No, I've not come to bring ye gold,  
Gold for to set ye free;  
But I have come to see ye hanged,  
Hanged on the gallows tree."

"Hangman, hangman, hold your rope,  
Hold your rope for awhile;  
I think I see my sweetheart coming,  
He's run for many a mile.

"O my lover, have you brought me gold,  
Gold for to set me free?  
Or have you come to see me hanged,  
Hanged on the gallows tree?"

"O yes, my love, I have brought ye gold,  
Gold for to set ye free;  
I have not come to see ye hanged,  
Hanged on the gallows tree."

This ballad was recorded from the singing of Mrs. Jennie Mason of Stone's River Road. It is a version of Child ballad 95, "The Maid Freed from the Gallows." All English versions are defective and distorted. The Cannon County version is even more distorted and lacking in details. In many other versions both from northern and southern Europe, a young woman has fallen into the hands of corsairs. Her father, mother, brother, and sisters refuse to pay ransom, but her lover is eager to pay any price necessary to save her. The best ballad of the cycle is Sicilian, "Scibilia Novili."<sup>11</sup> Numerous versions have been found in Finland and Esthonia, and some occur in Russia.

#### CROSS-EYED DAVID

Cross-Eyed David was going through the lane  
Singing a song so gay,  
Singing a song of the long summer day  
To charm the heart of his lady,  
To charm the heart of his lady.

"How old are you, my pretty little miss?  
How old are you, my honey?"  
The servant girl in the cook-room replied,  
"She'll be sixteen next Sunday,  
She'll be sixteen next Sunday."

"Come go with me, my pretty little miss,  
Come go with me, my honey;  
Come go with me, my pretty little miss,  
And you never will want for money,  
And you never will want for money."

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

She skipped up the long stair steps,  
Went pulling for her slippers  
And putting on her high heel shoes  
To go with Cross-Eyed David,  
To go with Cross-Eyed David.

Her husband came in that very night  
Asking for his lady.  
The servant girl in the cook-room replied,  
"She's gone with Cross-Eyed David,  
She's gone with Cross-Eyed David."

"Go bridle and saddle my old gray mare  
And I'll ride till I find my lady."  
He rode, he rode to the dark blue sea,  
And there he found his lady,  
And there he found his lady.

"Have you forsaken your house and home?  
Have you forsaken your baby?  
Have you forsaken your own true love  
To go with Cross-Eyed David,  
To go with Cross-Eyed David?"

"Yes, I've forsaken my house and home.  
Yes, I've forsaken my baby,  
Yes, I've forsaken my own true love  
To go with Cross-Eyed David,  
To go with Cross-Eyed David."

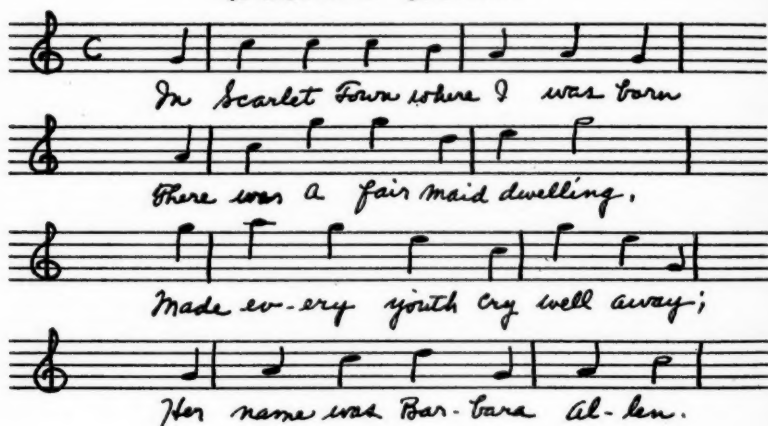
"Will you pull off your sky blue glove  
That's made of Spanish leather  
And give to me your lily-white hand  
And say farewell forever,  
And say farewell forever?"

"Yes, I'll pull off my sky blue glove  
That's made of Spanish leather  
And give to you my lily-white hand  
And say farewell forever,  
And say farewell forever."

"Last night you slept on your warm feather bed  
With your husband and your baby;  
Tonight you'll sleep on the cold damp ground  
With your arms 'round Cross-Eyed David,  
With your arms 'round Cross-Eyed David."

Miss Nora Dean Higgins of Stone's River Road sang "Cross-Eyed David." It is a version of Child Ballad 200, "The Gypsy Laddie." The ballad was printed in Scotland two hundred years ago, perhaps earlier in England. In Cannon County, the gypsy idea is lost. Instead, the dashing lover has acquired the ludicrous name, which, by no stretch of the imagination, can be considered complimentary. "He's so cross-eyed that when he cries the tears roll down the back of his neck" is the unsympathetic comment of the hill-man when describing a person so afflicted. But with all that, David must have been captivating. Other Tennessee versions refer to him as Black Jack Davy. The story has some similarity, in structure, to "The House Carpenter." Both ballads tell of young wives, hardly more than children, who are rather easily persuaded to desert their husbands to go with lovers more romantic, if less opulent. But the ballad singer, characteristically, leaves much to the imagination, feeling it sufficient merely to hint at the lover's persuasive art, which, in reality, may have been persistent as well as intensive.

*Barbara Allen*



BARBARA ALLEN

In Scarlet Town where I was born  
 There was a fair maid dwelling,  
 Made every youth cry well away;  
 Her name was Barbara Allen.



All in the merry month of May  
When the green buds they were swelling  
Sweet William came from the western states  
And courted Barbara Allen.

He sent his servant to the town  
Where Barbara was a-dwelling;  
"My master is sick and sent for you  
If your name be Barbara Allen.

"And death is painted on his face  
And o'er his heart is stealing;  
Then hasten away to comfort him,  
O lovely Barbara Allen."

So slowly, slowly she got up,  
And slowly she came nigh him,  
And all she said when she got there,  
"Young man, I think you're dying."

"O yes, I'm sick and very sick,  
And death is on me dwelling;  
No better, no better, I never can be  
If I can't get Barbara Allen."

"O don't you remember in yonder town  
When you were at the tavern,  
You drank a health to the ladies all 'round  
And slighted Barbara Allen?"

"Oh yes, I remember in yonder town,  
In yonder town a-drinking;  
I gave health to the ladies all 'round,  
But my heart to Barbara Allen."

As she was on her highway home,  
The birds they kept a-singing;  
They sang so clear they seemed to say,  
"Hard-hearted Barbara Allen."

She looked to the east, she looked to the west,  
She spied the corpse a-coming;  
"Lay down, lay down that corpse of clay  
That I may look upon him."

The more she looked, the more she mourned,  
Till she fell to the ground a-crying,  
Said, "Take me up and carry me home,  
For I am now a-dying."

"Oh Mother, O Mother, go make my bed,  
Go make it long and narrow;  
Sweet William died for me today,  
I'll die for him tomorrow.

"O Father, O Father, go dig my grave,  
Go dig it long and narrow;  
Sweet William died for pure, pure love,  
And I shall die for sorrow."

She was buried in the old churchyard,  
And he was buried nigh her;  
On William's grave there grew a red rose,  
On Barbara's grew a green briar.

They grew to the top of the old church tower,  
And they could grow no higher;  
They hooked, they tied a true love's knot,  
Red rose around the briar.

"Barbara Allen" is the best known of the Old English ballads in Cannon County. The above version was given by Esten Macon of Readyville. It is one of the most popular of the Old English ballads everywhere. It is also perhaps one of the oldest. Pepys makes this entry in his *Diary*, January 2, 1666: "In perfect pleasure I was to hear her [Mrs. Knipp] sing, and especially her little Scotch song of Barbary Allen." Goldsmith wrote in 1765: "The music of the finest singer is dissonance to what I felt when our old dairy-maid sung me to tears with 'Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night,' or the 'Cruelty of Barbara Allen.'"

#### THE OLD FARMER'S WIFE

There was an old woman who lived under the hill,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
And if she's not moved off she lives there still,  
To whack to whiddle de day.

Her old man come whistling from the plow,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
Says, "Old Woman, you got dinner ready now?"  
To whack to whiddle de day.

"There's a piece of cold bread laying on the shelf,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
If you want any mutton go fry it yourself."  
To whack to whiddle de day.

He went down to his sheep pen,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
And with his knife he took off wool and skin,  
To whack to whiddle de day.

He stretched that skin over Honey's back,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
And with a club he made it crack,  
To whack to whiddle de day.

Harder luck to the devil never befell,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
For he shouldered and packed her off to hell,  
To whack to whiddle de day.

One little devil come limping around,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
She up with a cleaver and knocked him down,  
To whack to whiddle de day.

Another little devil peeped over the wall,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
Says, "Take her back, Pap, before she kills us all."  
To whack to whiddle de day.

He took her up across his back,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
And like an old fool went packing her back,  
To whack to whiddle de day.

The old woman went whistling across the hill,  
To whack to whiddle de day,  
Says, "The devil won't have me, I wonder who will."  
To whack to whiddle de day.

"The Old Farmer's Wife" was sung by Mrs. Dema Bowen. It is really a combination of two old ballads, "The Farmer's Curst Wife," Child ballad 278, and "The Wife Wrapt in a Wether's Skin," Child ballad 277.

The curst wife, a terror to demons, is a feature widely spread, and it makes a highly humorous tale. Child ballad 278 tells the story of a Sussex farmer who has a shrewish wife. The devil approaches the farmer and tells him that he will have his wife, meaning, apparently, that he finds her acceptable, even though no one else does. The delighted farmer replies:

"O welcome, good Satan, with all my heart!  
I hope you and she will never part."

The devil lugs her off. On entering hell-gate she begins kicking the young imps about.

She spied thirteen imps all dancing in chains  
She up with her pattens and beat out their brains.

After Satan himself is knocked against the wall, he packs her back to her husband, who is willing to take her again. The devil deposits her with relief:

"I have been a tormenter the whole of my life,  
But I never was tormented so as with your wife."

The story of the ballad, "The Wife Wrapt in a Wether's Skin," is probably derived from Hazlitt's tale of "The Wife Lapped in Morrel's Skin."<sup>12</sup> Here a husband, who has borne a great deal of shrewishness from an excessively sharp-tongued wife, skins his old horse Morrel and salts the hide. He takes his wife down to the cellar, beats her with birch sticks until she swoons, and then wraps her in the salted hide, after which the woman is perfectly reformed. After the lashing, the wife is so completely humbled that she offers to take the goad and follow the plough.

### CHEVY CHASE

A fragment is all that is left of "Chevy Chase" in Cannon County. It was recited by Miss Annie Martin of Short Mountain. She could recall neither the tune nor any more of the ballad.

"Chevy Chase," Child ballad 162, was an old and popular song in 1550.<sup>13</sup> This ballad and "The Battle of Otterburn" seem to have been founded on the same occurrence. Among all the ballads, it is one of the best. Addison says:

The old song of Chevy Chase is the favorite ballad of the common people of England; and Ben Johnson used to say he had rather have been the author of it than of all his works. Sir Philip Sidney, in his discourse of poetry, speaks of it in the following words: "I never heard the old song of Piercy and Douglas, that I found not my heart more moved than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung by some blind crowder with no rougher voice than a rude style; which being so evil appparelled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?"<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 603.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.

<sup>14</sup> *The Spectator*, LXX, 320.

Addison, however, did not agree with Sidney on one point:

I must, . . . , beg leave to dissent from so great an authority as that of Sir Philip Sidney, in the judgment which he has passed as to the rude style and evil apparel of the antiquated song; for there are several parts in it where not only the thought but the language is majestic, and the numbers sonorous.<sup>15</sup>

The ballad tells the story of a bloody battle and dreadful scene of death, caused by feuds which reigned between the families of English and Scottish noblemen. It may have been designed for instruction, or perhaps the ballad singer was fond of applying old examples to new situations. At any rate the ballad opens:

God save the King, and bless the land  
In plenty, joy, and peace;  
And grant henceforth that foul debate  
"Twixt noblemen may cease.

The English are the first on the field and the last to leave it. They bring only fifteen hundred men to battle; the Scots, two thousand. The English keep the field with fifty-three; the Scots retire with fifty-five. In the thick of the fight, Earl Douglas rode foremost in the company on a milk-white steed and accosted Percy.

"One of us," he says, "must die. I am an Earl as well as yourself. You can have no reason to refuse combat. It is a pity that so many men should die for our sakes. Rather let you and I end our quarrel in a single fight."

They fight, and Earl Douglas falls. "Fight on, my merry men," he cries. "Lord Percy sees my fall."

It is with the foregoing incident that the Cannon County fragment of the ballad deals:

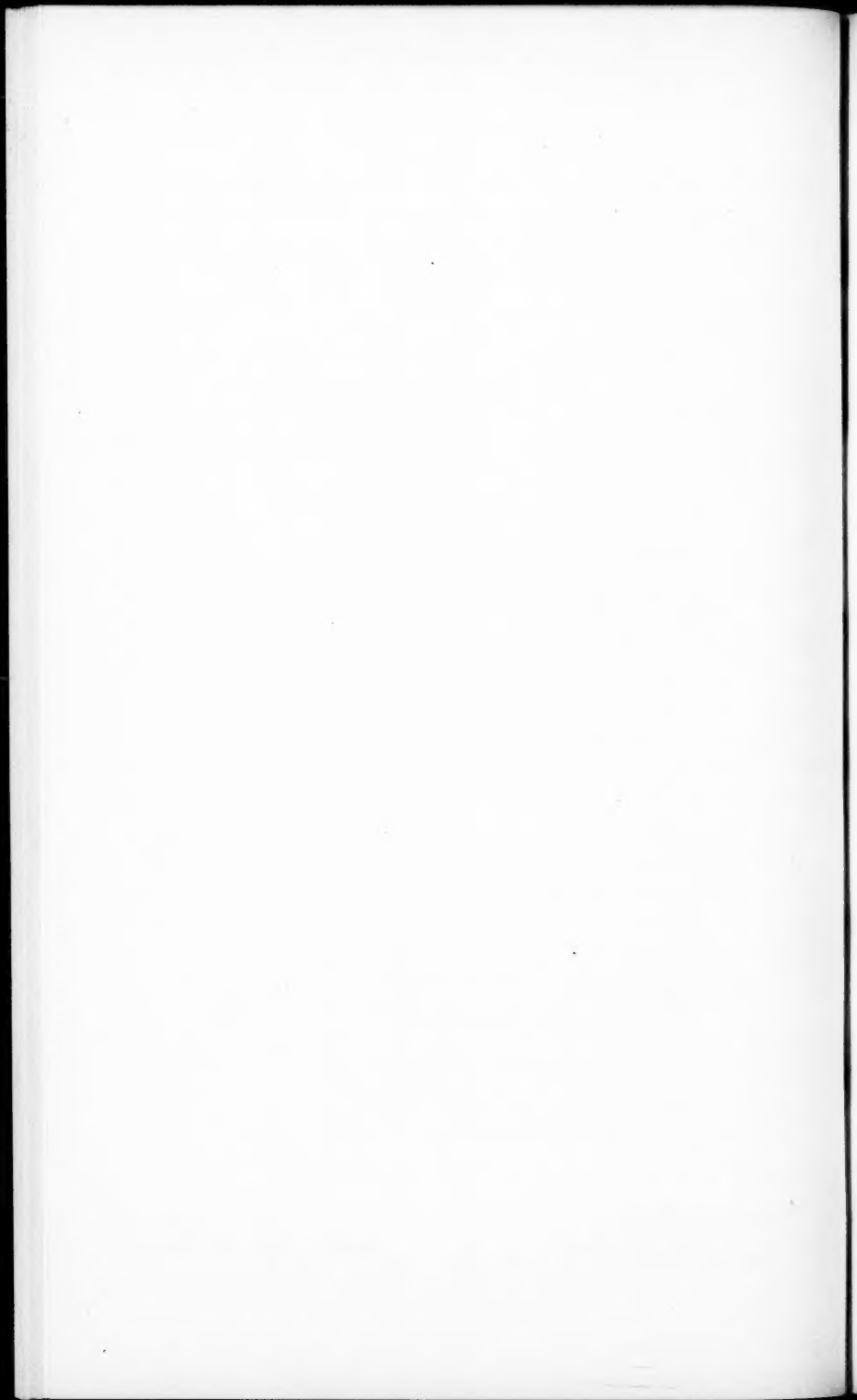
At last these two stout earls did meet  
Like captains of great might;  
Like lions wode, they laid on lode,  
And made a cruel fight.

They fought until they both did sweat  
With swords of tempered steel,  
Until the blood, like drops of rain,  
They trickling down did feel.

And it is the most dramatic part that has survived.

*U. S. Naval Academy*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, LXXIV, 339.



## RIDDLES IN THE EMIGRANTS' PENNY MAGAZINE

by

Archer Taylor

The riddles<sup>1</sup> reprinted by Philip D. Jordan from the above-named magazine printed at Plymouth between 1850 and 1852 for emigrants to the United States are very interesting and call for brief comment. The old puzzle about carrying the fox, goose, and sack of corn (or wolf, goat, and cabbagehead) across the river has been current since the early Middle Ages, and many Latin versions are still buried in European manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> I shall add to previous collections of parallels only a reference to the version told by the Ila in Africa, who say that there is no solution.<sup>3</sup> The riddle about the owners of five and seven eggs who by transferring one egg come to have either equal numbers of eggs or a number half as large as the other owner is not quite so widely known.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Jordan's conjecture that such publications as this penny magazine disseminated riddles is proved up to the hilt by the bed riddle, which smells more of the lamp than the folk. It is current in both England<sup>5</sup> and many parts of the western world.<sup>6</sup> The most curious of all these texts consists in the enigmatic descriptions of ten birds. Although no resemblances in details appear on comparison, I conjecture that a very old German set of questions about birds may have been the model for the English riddle.

<sup>1</sup> *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, X (1946), 235-238.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Bibliography of Riddles* (Helsinki, 1939), p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Edwin W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), II, 333.

<sup>4</sup> A. H. Fauset, "Negro Folk-Tales from the South," *Journal of American Folklore*, XL (1927), 276-292, No. 180 (dollars). Frisian: Dykstra, *In doaze fol alde snypsnaren* (Frjentsjer, 1882), p. 110. Flemish: Amaat Joos, *Raadsels van het vlaamsche volks* (Brussels, n.d. [ca. 1926]), 1131. German: Hanika-Otto, *Sudetendeutsche Volksrätsel* (Reichenberg, 1930), No. 502. Danish: E. T. Kristensen, *Danske folkegaader* (Struer, 1913), pp. 241-242. Nos. 11-13. Norwegian: Stafset, *280 gamle norske gaator* (Valden, 1908), No. 120. Swedish: Hyltén-Cavallius, *Nyare bidrag till kännedom om de svenska landsmålen*, II, viii (1882), No. 112; Ström, *Svenska folkgåtor* (Stockholm, 1937), p. 349, "Räkne-gåtor," No. 1. Breton: Sauv  , "Devinettes bretonnes," *Revue celtique*, IV (1879-1880), 60-103, Nos. 161 a, 161 b.

<sup>5</sup> J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, *Nursery Rhymes* (London, 1886), p. 131; E. M. Leather, *The Folklore of Herefordshire* (London, 1912), p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> Elisabeth B. Greenleaf, "Riddles of Newfoundland," *The Marshall Review*, I, iii (Huntington, W. Va.), 5-20, especially p. 8, No. 3; F. W. Waugh, "Canadian Folklore from Ontario," *Journal of American Folklore*, XXXI (1918), 70, No. 800; Karl Knortz, *Streifz  ge auf dem Gebiete amerikanischer Volk-skunde* (Leipzig, 1902), p. 230 (Cincinnati); Elsie Clews Parsons, "Bermuda Folklore," *Journal of American Folklore*, XXXVIII (1925), 261, No. 121; Martha W. Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York, 1924), p. 213, No. 240.



A modern version containing seven birds (other versions name from three to ten birds) is as follows:

With the first it is a matter of courage (owl),  
The second knows nothing of blood (dungbeetle),  
The third knows nothing of gall (dove),  
The fourth is everywhere a ruler (wren),  
The fifth knows nothing of a tongue (stork),  
The sixth suckles its young (bat),  
The seventh eats food three years old (thrush).<sup>7</sup>

Versions of this series are current in Germany from the fourteenth century on. The dungbeetle and the bat are popularly referred to as birds, and the beetles involved in these lines are well-attested in folklore.

*University of California*

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<sup>7</sup> See Wossidlo, *Rätsel* (Wismar, 1897), No. 170. For the medieval version see the editions of the *Trougemundslid* cited in Gustav Ehrismann, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Pt. II, *Schlussband* (Munich, 1935), pp. 352-353.

## THE IDEAL HERO OF ANTIQUITY AND HIS COUNTERPART IN THE COMIC STRIP OF TODAY

by

Stuart A. Gallacher

After observing the activity of collectors of American folklore for several years, years in which the tall tale, miners' lore, folksongs, ballads, wart cures and a host of other categories have become much alive through the medium of print, it seems an opportune time to take a good look at our comic strips. Little have we thought that they, so full of everything the bewildered human soul seeks, might be worthy of our serious attention, i. e., that they should receive a proper and permanent place in the archives of folklore.<sup>1</sup> They are indeed more than mere entertainment. They are of the same substance that gave rise to mythology, tradition, superstition, magic and other phases of ancient folklore.<sup>2</sup>

There are two reasons that substantiate the assertion that our comic strips are fundamentally folklore material. The first is that in human nature there is an element that urges man to seek an explanation of and to desire to see or experience that which lies beyond the veil. There is an ever-present longing in man to break the bonds that hold him in this finite mortal realm. Thus, it ought to be only mildly surprising to us to discover that some of our comic characters are graphic products of the twentieth-century mind in its attempt to satisfy this longing. The second element is one of credulity. By this is meant acceptance by the folk of the plausibility of the events related. Such a condition is a fundamental characteristic of folklore.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Richard M. Dorson's articles, "America's Comic Demigods," *The American Scholar*, X (1941), 389-401 in which he shows possible folkloristic elements in the accomplishments and natures of several of our comic heroes such as Paul Bunyan, Big Mose, Strap Buckner, Febold Feboldson and many others. He draws this pertinent conclusion, "For the present at any rate the Bunyans, Finks and John Henrys occupy a burlesque level, if an unerasable place, in American tradition—perhaps doomed for further indignities in the folklore of the comic strips, perhaps destined for immortality in the unwritten American epic." Page 401. Cf. also his article, "Davy Crockett and the Heroic Age," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, VI (1942), 95-102 in which he shows the rise of legends connected with Davy Crockett and gives us parallels from the lore of the Old World.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. G. von Hahn, *Griechische und albanesische Märchen*, (Leipzig, 1864), pp. 23 ff. in which he shows the transition of material in the Götter-und Helden-sagen to material suitable for märchen. Some people prefer to call this process a "Dwinding of the hero," but I prefer to call it a change of dress.

<sup>3</sup> In all ages there were those who found in tales about exceptional heroes and the like things they could believe and undoubtedly did believe, where informed

An impressive number of our comic heroes are certainly regarded credulously by the general level of American intelligence.

Why the phenomena of nature and human behavior are as they are we still do not know completely. This ignorance, however, does not prevent us from imagining, concocting, conjuring up or fabricating explanations for the whys and wherefores of our complex existence. Moreover, ignorance of the true nature of things is not a fact to prohibit our speculating on how conditions might be were we able to be beyond the bonds of mortality. Then, too, our ignorance does not prevent us from trying to create situations we would like to have exist in our, as yet, insensible world. In addition, it does not impede our projecting ourselves through varied media into these created situations, so that we may derive some small amount of pleasure. Furthermore, we are not disturbed even though our vicarious methods may seem to be somewhat crude.

All men at some time or other have longed to do the impossible. All ages have experienced an expression of this same longing. The dress of each age is left stamped in the mythologies, legends, sagas, epics and fairy tales we are now privileged to enjoy only because some one took the time and trouble to preserve them for us in writing. Thus, we can see that heroes of all times have been similar to one another. They have been men whose physical appearance resembled any other normally formed human. In no instances do we find monsters of any type. Giants and their kind have always been incidental. The folk has conceived forms based upon the limits of its own experiences. Only the environment in which the hero traveled brought about a change in the problems confronting the various heroes in their respective ages. This factor has been responsible for what we now call the dress of an age. For instance, to Homer and the ancients speed was not a prime factor, but to us great distances and the ability to cover them with the greatest of ease is a commonplace. It is one mark of our age.

Our age has other features, too. It is a question, however, whether or not one wants to recognize the characteristics of the present era and take the means at one's disposal to preserve our peculiar dress for later generations to study. For this reason our comic strips are called upon to enter the picture. They certainly possess the ele-

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minds rejected them even though the entertainment value was fully realized. There is a distinction between the hero tale, which embodies the expression of human longing and the lying tale of the Baron Münchhausen variety, which one accepts solely as entertainment, not as folklore.

ments needed to impress upon our minds the nature of our time. To this end I shall attempt to draw a few parallels between some of the heroes of antiquity and characters of our comic strips. In addition, this procedure will show us an old fact we have been too wont to overlook—that human nature does not change even though the dress of one age differs markedly from that of another.

Now let us turn back the pages of time and assume that we had radio and printing in the age of Homer and the other ancient story tellers. What would have happened to the tales about Ulysses, Achilles, Hercules and the numerous other heroes less well known? Their exploits and accomplishments would have been multiplied over and over until they would have equaled or surpassed the present deeds of our blue-and-red-cloaked *Superman*. Having become commonplace they scarcely would have become the recorded deeds of great heroes and lesser gods. Had that happened, we, in all probability, would not regard them as highly in the lore of human life and longing as we do now. As a matter of fact it is very likely that we would look upon them with distinct disdain. We are only too aware that a great quantity of one thing frequently reduces its value to a miserable minimum. Very much the same is the case for our untiring present day heroes of the comic strips. The radio and modern printing are wrecking their chances of being immortalized as were Ulysses, Achilles, Hercules, Siegfried and the host of medieval heroes that followed them. For this reason our present heroes will fall into oblivion. They will not find their way into the pattern of the oral-traditional tale and become *märchen*. Nevertheless, they will and do satisfy both the entertainment and the escapist elements of the *märchen*. The great ideal hero and his adventures in overcoming his obstacles do live again—but in the cloak of twentieth-century expression.

What are some of the specific similarities between the old and the new? To show them, let us single out a few characters from both. Since Hercules, a lesser god of ancient Greece and Rome, is so well known, he will serve as an excellent starting point. A primary characteristic common to all ideal heroes is the miraculousness or spuriousness connected with their origin or birth. The origin of Hercules is spurious to say the least.<sup>4</sup> Some mind of man, in all probability, has created him to represent the superhuman element of strength in

<sup>4</sup> Cf. O. Seemann, *The Mythology of Greece and Rome*, (New York, n.d.), pp. 288-9. "But in the mean while the great ruler of Olympus himself had been smitten with the charms of Alcmena, and, taking the form of the absent Amphitryon, had left her pregnant with Heracles, to whom she afterward gave birth at the same time with Iphicles, the son of Amphitryon."

the ideal hero. His enormous strength is legendary. He proved it by completing tasks requiring physical power far beyond that attained by mortal man. Most people are familiar with his twelve tasks, not the least of which was to hold up the pillars of the heavens for a while for Atlas when Hercules passed by that way in search of the apples of the Hesperides.<sup>5</sup> Hercules is a good soul, but we do not particularly know him as a personifier of great virtue. Nor does he possess all the characteristics of an ideal hero. He does, however, have an important element common to the ideal, namely, he is almost immortal. His death is brought about by means of his wife Deianira making use of the charm of Nessus. Only after death befell him was he received into Olympus and supposedly apotheosized.<sup>6</sup>

His mortality, to be sure, was not in the same sense as was that of the two great warriors, Achilles and Siegfried, but rather like that of Baldur, the Norse demi-god. Achilles and Siegfried represent the completely human level of our ancient folklore. When they died, they remained outside the realms of the deities.<sup>7</sup> Baldur, however, lived on in Norse mythology, but, like Hercules, was not particularly potent after the interim of death. Now we shall see that in each case only one thing separated these heroes from immortality. Achilles was vulnerable in the heel. It was this part of his body to which his mother had held when she immersed him in the river of Styx.<sup>8</sup> The waif Siegfried's vulnerable spot was on his back between his shoulders where a linden leaf had fallen which prevented the dragon's blood from covering the spot.<sup>9</sup> Baldur, the virtuous, kind and shining plaything of the Norse gods, was vulnerable to the lowly mistletoe from which his mother Frigg had failed to exact an oath of allegiance.<sup>10</sup>

Each of these heroes met death through trickery. Hercules fell before the charm of Nessus when his wife thought to restore his love to her by preparing his garment in the particular fat with the special

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 235 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 243 f.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290. After Achilles' death the Nereids bewailed his untimely fate singing,

"See, tears are shed by every god and goddess, to survey  
How soon the Beautiful is past, the Perfect dies away."

Cf. also *The Nibelungenlied*, trsl. by D. B. Shumway, (Boston and New York, 1909), pp. 134 ff. for the death and burial of Siegfried.

<sup>8</sup> Seemann, *ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>9</sup> Shumway, *ibid.*, p. xxi, note 1.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. John A. MacCulloch, "Eddic Mythology," [*The Mythology of all Races*, (Boston, 1930)], II, 129.

properties. Apollo guided a shaft shot by Paris to Achilles' heel.<sup>11</sup> Hagen wormed out the secret spot from Kriemhilda under the pretense of wanting to protect it in battle. Then, while Siegfried had knelt down to sup water from a spring, the treacherous scoundrel drove a spear through the spot.<sup>12</sup> Baldur was shot by the blind god Holdr, whose hand was guided by the Norse arch-rascal Loki, who had learned the secret and had fashioned an arrow made of a mistletoe twig.<sup>13</sup> To supplement the qualification of fabulous or spurious birth for the ideal hero, we can cite the origins or births of Achilles, Siegfried and Baldur, which are just as spurious as that of Hercules.<sup>14</sup>

The above have been chosen for very definite reasons, that they present collectively a prototype of a personage who embodies the type of being the human mind might conjure up to be able to perform the impossible. Thus, for our purposes, Hercules and Baldur together contribute the superhuman elements of excessive strength and virtue.<sup>15</sup> Achilles and Siegfried represent exceptional accomplishments on the strictly human level. Siegfried demonstrates a particularly desirable accomplishment—the ability to make himself invisible though a mortal.<sup>16</sup> These four heroes possess almost all the qualifications the hero should have who is to do the impossible. The ideal hero, surely, should also have unlimited speed, eyesight capable of penetrating solid objects to detect hidden things and lastly, power to call the unseen world into action. Who in antiquity can offer us

<sup>11</sup> Seemann, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

<sup>12</sup> Shumway, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-3.

<sup>13</sup> Mac Culloch, *loc. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Seemann, *op. cit.*, p. 282, "As a reward for his (Peleus') chastity, the god gave him the goddess Thetis—a beautiful daughter of Nereus—to wife. She bore him one son, Achilleus (Achilles), the greatest and bravest hero of the Trojan war." Cf. also Shumway, *op. cit.*, p. xx, note 1, "The *Thidreksaga* differs from the other Norse versions in having *Sigfröd*, as he is called here, brought up in ignorance of his parents, a trait which was probably borrowed from the widespread *Genoveva* story, although thought by some to have been an original feature of our legend." Otherwise Siegfried was the son of a certain Siegmund, "who was slain in battle before the birth of his son. Sigurd was carefully reared by his mother Hjórdís and the wise dwarf Regin, who taught him the knowledge of runes and many languages." *Ibid.*, xx. For the birth of Baldur see *ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>15</sup> One might raise the question of infallible intelligence or intelligence which is almost infallible for our hero, but such a characteristic is reserved for and limited to gods. Heroes must be naïve to a certain degree. They must be capable of committing poor judgment on occasion. Their mistakes, of course, may not be many, but there must be a weak spot in their intellectual armor or they might otherwise discover the secret to eternal life. Moreover, since man has no idea of intellectual infallibility, how could man conceivably create a hero with such a quality?

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Shumway, *op. cit.*, p. 58, "Meanwhile Siegfried, the stately man, or ever any marked it, had hid him to the ship, where he found his magic cloak concealed. Into it he quickly slipped and so was seen of none."

such accomplishments? Hermes, the messenger of the gods,<sup>17</sup> or to be more earthly, even the seven-leagued boots of the Fairy Tales<sup>18</sup> could supply us with the element of speed. We could call upon Lynceus, the son of Aphareus, who "could even see things under ground" for our special eyesight.<sup>19</sup> Lastly, ancient folklore is replete with characters possessing an object of some sort with magic power to call the hidden world into action, e. g., Aladdin and his magic lamp.<sup>20</sup>

By putting all these characteristics into one being we certainly have a personage fully representing the most common attributes for which mortal man longs in order to remove himself from the narrow confines of this terrestrial existence. In sum, our composite creature consists of superhuman physical strength, virtue beyond that of sinful man, sufficiently mundane so as to wrestle with earthly tasks much as we naïvely do, the ability to be felt or heard without being seen, the speed to overtake anything and finally the ability to command the unseen world into personal service.

Anyone possessing these qualities is definitely not of this world as we know it. Nevertheless, all ages give evidence that man has imagined and undoubtedly will continue to imagine himself into the realm of infinity in order to satisfy his longing to be there, though it be vicariously. This sort of projection is only another way for many to attempt to experience a conception of salvation not contained in a religious creed—a salvation which is a desire to be beyond the power of one's enemies or competitors, to outstrip all competition.

Do the characters of the comic strips deprive us of the enjoyment of these flights of fancy? Not in the least, they stimulate such activity. As a matter of fact, they condition mental reaction to such an extent that things which seemed obviously ridiculous just a few years back no longer provoke us mentally. We feel that each passing day brings us something that breaks down the limits of our so-called rational impossibilities and almost forces us into accepting an unlimited realm of future marvelous attainments. We are edging ourselves into a reality that bodes fair to make it possible for beings from other spheres to pay us a visit. We are no longer absolute in

<sup>17</sup> Seemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 71 ff.

<sup>18</sup> C. Perrault, *Conte de Fées*, (Paris n.d.), pp. 72-88, "Le petit poucet."

<sup>19</sup> "Apollodorous," II, 13, [*Loeb Classical Library*, (London and New York, 1921)].

<sup>20</sup> Cf. "The Thousand and One Nights," (*The Harvard Classics*, (New York, 1909)), pp. 355 ff. See also Stith Thompson, "Motif-Index of Folk-Literature," [*Indiana University Studies*, (Bloomington, 1930)], II, D800-D2199. These items deal with magic objects in general.



our belief that, under the high heavens, there may not be a form of life that might surpass ours, let alone maintain that ours and only ours is the supreme and unique form in the expanses of space. This element of doubt is the loophole some assiduous mind always seizes to conjure up the extraordinary and present it in a vivid form for our consumption. The process of the development of the fantastic is much like that assigned to the growth of sin: first endured, then pitied, and finally embraced.

Now, what about the particulars of our ideal hero? We, just like the ancients, have not been successful in wrapping up all our extraordinary qualifications in one figure. We, too, have scattered them among several. Nevertheless, let us take particular note of *Superman*,<sup>21</sup> who, unlike most creations, uses no special gadgets. His powers are inborn in him. They are physical powers he brought with him from his world. His accomplishments satisfy almost all of our assumed requirements. There are only two lacking: the ability to make himself invisible, unless he travels so fast the human eye cannot detect him, and to be able to control the unseen world surrounding us. Who has not heard his exploits on the radio or read them in the comic strips? Who is not familiar with his x-ray vision, the ease with which he can stop a speeding locomotive, or leap tall buildings in a single bound, or travel faster than a speeding bullet, in fact as fast as lightning? That is not all, for he travels between our planets with the greatest of ease. He is not the least bit disturbed by the changes in the temperature or atmosphere. He is able to burrow into the depths of the earth or descend to the bottom of the sea without any discomfort. What has antiquity conjured up to compare with him? The elements which he lacks can easily be found. For instance, *The Shadow* can supply the factor of invisibility.<sup>22</sup> For the power to call the unseen world into service we can pick out the *Asp* or *Punjab* of *Orphan Annie* fame,<sup>23</sup> or even *Mandrake the Magician*.<sup>24</sup>

Since the ancients could not grasp immortality fully, we, too, show that incapability and must find a vulnerable spot for our creation. Similarly, we must also make his origin of a fabulous or spurious nature. How does *Superman* measure up to these points? Is he vulnerable to something or other? Is his origin fabulous or

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Action Comics*, published by Detective Comics, Inc., (New York, 1946), Nos. 92 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Shadow Comics*, published by Street and Smith Publications, Inc., (New York, 1946), VI.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, January-February, 1946.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Magic Comics*, published by David McKay Company, (Philadelphia, 1945), No. 77.

spurious? We find in answer to the first, that the element "Cryptonite" is the only thing capable of destroying him. Up to now he has managed to escape its fatal effect. Some of his escapes, however, have been narrow and breathtaking! What about his origin? We are told that the planet "Crypton" disintegrated, but shortly before the annihilating explosion *Superman* miraculously escaped and made his way to our earth. It is singular indeed, that the only thing with the power to destroy him should be an element from the earth that bore him.

One could continue at length citing parallels in our comic strips to other folkloristic elements such as shape-changers, innumerable magic objects, charms and the like,<sup>25</sup> but these are not necessary to demonstrate or prove the thesis further. The fact is simply this: man does long to do the impossible, to be something he is not. As long as human nature is composed of such attributes, we shall continue to find folklore being made, but made and cloaked in the dress of the age it represents. Be our form *Superman*, a creation without special mechanical implements to help him perform, or *Buck Rogers* with all the scientific concoctions imaginable, we shall still love to dream, and dreaming, we shall attempt to venture into the beyond. We shall continue to construct ideal creatures.

Just as we have tried to explain things in our imaginations so has each age that has gone before us. Thus, a progressive imagining has been going on to produce a means that makes our dreaming less fantastic and less inconceivable. Each new invention of modern times now demonstrates this fact to us. A flight to the moon, wanton monstrous destructions, or cataclysmic events are no longer pure fiction. We are building a new age of folklore, but folklore it still is in its old sense—the folk's attempt to explain the phenomena of nature and human behavior in its own way. Its credulity is not zero by any manner of measurement. Our comic strips, then, although looked upon mostly as entertainment, are not to be tossed crassly aside because they may not seem plausible, but are indeed worthy of evaluation. They are fully capable of standing beside the other types of folkloristic materials being gathered at present. If fabricating tall tales and great lies of obvious incredulity concerning certain well-known heroes is folklore and if fabrication is a chief characteristic of human nature, then the comic strips have the elements of traditional lore and therefore should be reckoned as a part of the great body of folk tradition.

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<sup>25</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, I-VI. Consult volume VI for specific desired topic.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### FOLKLORE IN RECENT MAINE BOOKS

by

B. J. Whiting

*Land of Enchantment, the Penobscot Bay-Mount Desert Region of Maine*, by Dan Stiles. Concord, New Hampshire. Sugar Ball Press, 1945. 181. \$2.75.

*Right As Rain, The Story of My Maine Grandmother*, by Bernice Richmond. New York, 1946. Random House. 211. \$2.50.

*Farmer Takes a Wife*, by John Gould. New York, 1946. William Morrow & Co. 153. \$2.00

*Yankee Storekeeper*, by R. E. Gould. New York, 1946. Whittlesey House. 195. \$2.50.

*History of the Town of Morrill in the County of Waldo and State of Maine . . . from its First Settlement in 1794 to 1887, Embracing Almost 100 Years*, by Timothy W. Robinson, copied and edited by Theoda Mears Morse. Belfast, Maine, 1944. 253. \$2.75. [Copies may be secured from Charles White, Morrill Historical Society, Morrill, Maine.]

Maine is a highly individual state and its people are highly individualistic; indeed they sometimes devote thought and energy to the development and growth of their peculiarities, not without a canny eye to the demands of the out-of-state summer visitors (often called the Summer Complaint) who, year after year, turn up with the same rather wistful desire to have their work done by characters and "cards." This compliance with economic determinism has resulted in a certain degree of split personality in Maine talkers and writers and a consequent need for a judicious weighing of any evidence about Maine character and folkways which has been produced for the export trade. The political habits of Maine have furnished more than one by-word. "Maine went hell-bent for Governor Kent," but Kent was a Whig who won by 12 votes; "As Maine goes, so goes the Union," which has been generally true since 1860, always provided that the Union went Republican. In 1936 this saying was changed to "As Maine goes, so goes Vermont," a juxtaposition which caused some Maine people to wish that they had voted otherwise for, as one of our authors (R. E. Gould) remarks casually, "if there is anything to make a Maine man's appetite go bad, it's northern Vermont."

Books of the kind treated in this review are not written for students of folklore, but, generally speaking, they help to paint a picture, even if some of the details are a little synthetic, which is invaluable for the understanding of folkways. The regional literature of Maine is extensive and, except for fiction, its varieties are fairly well rep-

resented here. Of the lot, Mr. Stiles's book is the least rewarding, for it is patently directed toward tourists. The title, *Land of Enchantment*, seems pretentious even to a native of the region prepared to contend that if Penobscot Bay had a volcano, in itself a dubious blessing, no one would dare mention the Bay of Naples in the same breath. A number of very good photographs are reproduced, but the text is a mixture of statements, occasionally incorrect, about present day conditions, and anecdotes dealing with earlier history, taken, not always with the greatest discrimination, from local historians whom Mr. Stiles, without too much reason, occasionally patronizes. Among the best legends of the Bay are those which tell of various efforts to dig up Captain Kidd's treasure, but of these there are few or no traces in the book. The *WPA Guide to Maine* is vastly more useful for the casual visitor or even for the native.

Miss Richmond's *Right as Rain* is, as its sub-title reveals, an addition to the steadily growing literature in which members of later generations reminisce about some older and, often fortunately, defunct member of the family. Miss Richmond's is not the first grandmother to be brought to life in what it is not unfair to call the School of Day (Clarence, not Holman), but few relatives exposed to literary exploitation have been treated with so much respect, tenderness, warmth, and, one suspects, truth. Some interesting folk details make an incidental appearance: Grammy's grandmother had been an Indian, apparently of Abnaki stock (pp. 45 ff.), and some Indian stories are told (pp. 53 f., 139); Grammy knew about using a long strip of apple-peel to reveal the initial of one's "intended" (p. 133), and that a new moon must be seen over the right shoulder and not through glass (p. 138); we read of elaborate needle work (pp. 23 f.), less elaborate hook rugs (pp. 26 ff.), and the homely, delectable dishes of Maine, Big Egg (pp. 10 f.), calico hash and dandelion greens (pp. 124 ff). The appeal and worth of the book, however, lies in the portrait of what seems to be a type less common now than at the turn of the century, the physically and mentally strong housewife, ingenious and alert, but little concerned with affairs beyond her home and family circle, to which she was almost fanatically devoted.

Mr. John Gould's *Farmer Takes a Wife* belongs to another well developed genre, that of the woman taken by marriage into an environment very different from any to which she has been accustomed, with the somewhat refreshing difference that this chronicle is told by the husband. It is less sensational than most examples of the type, since the lady is not transported to a lumber camp, a game warden's cabin, the uninhabited wilds of Canada or an egg-hatchery, but to a well aged, well equipped, comfortable Maine farm, on which very nearly her greatest hardship is to supply enough pie for her husband's Uncle Timothy. Uncle Timothy, by the way, gives Mr. Gould his opportunity for an affectionate portrayal of a member of the older generation, and he goes still farther back in time with a vignette (pp. 103 ff.) of a remote Aunt Susan who smoked a pipe and left behind her priceless recipes for pickles. *Farmer Takes a Wife* is a mild, genial book, which contains good stories of picturesque individuals,

many of them going back to Great-Grandfather's day. There is Samoset, which certainly was not his name, the Indian (pp. 24 ff.), who made the first Thanksgiving after the farm was settled a memorable one; neighbor Marshall (pp. 61 ff.) whose well was never failing, but who would not share its water in drought time, on the admirably Christian ground that if God had intended others to have water, he would have made their wells as good as his; Dr. Babcock (pp. 68 f.) who, when he borrowed Great-grandmother's big copper kettle to boil down a cadaver for the skeleton's sake, rather damaged her affection for the utensil; Mel Vanning (p. 70), who was greatly distressed when his wife hanged herself in an apple tree and in so doing kicked off too many green apples. Satchel-Eye Dyer gets a chapter (pp. 132 ff.) to himself, and he deserves it. At the age of four, Dyer was lost in a burned-over piece of woods and when found was conversing with the Almighty: "Hello, God—my name is 'Delbert Dyer; I got lost in the burnt woods. My mother has lost a fine boy.'" When, some years later, he brought home his bride he immediately set to picking over beans and, presently observing that his wife was merely sitting, he asked, "H'aunt you got su'thin' you can be doing, some mending or knitting?" He always found it hard to distinguish between house and barn and kept ducks in the parlor and shod horses in the kitchen. He was a great believer in hard work, but did not always care too much at what he worked; on one occasion he built a boat, in the front bedroom as it happened, although he lived thirty-five miles inland. He hung it in the barn and when some inquisitive visitor asked him why he had constructed a boat, he said that "it was a handy thing to keep beans in." Mrs. Dyer was not without personality. Once she had to kill a goose in a hurry and, no axe being handy, she sawed off its head. Again, when temporarily confined to her bed, one of her sons came in to say, "Maw, the old horse has fell down dead." Her rejoinder was, "Which way did he fall, Sylvanus?"

In *Yankee Storekeeper*, R. E. Gould, John Gould's uncle, tells of the tribulations and triumphs of the proprietor of one of those fabulous country stores which provided its customers with all the needs of life, and which have nearly disappeared from most of New England under the impact first of the mail-order firm and then, and most fatal, of the automobile and chain store. *Yankee Storekeeper* is a nostalgic book for anyone who grew up in rural New England before 1925, but for the most part it belongs to economic history rather than folklore. Residents of the South would be well advised to compare it with Thomas D. Clark's *Pills, Petticoats and Plows: the Southern Country Store* (Indianapolis, 1944). Mr. Gould writes with the shrewd self-complacency of a business man who has been successful in innumerable trades, and he views his world without illusions, even if with prejudices. He thinks little of school teachers and teaching methods (pp. 114 ff.) or of self-conscious churchgoers (pp. 142 ff.), but he praises the Grange and Grangers highly (pp. 153 ff.). He was not, as it happens, a teacher, though he demonstrated his ability in practical pedagogy to his own satisfaction, and he was not a church-goer, though he often found himself obliged to contribute to churches, but

he did belong to the Grange, enjoyed its ritual, and recognized that fellow-grangers were good customers. Mr. Gould has a good, therefore pawky, Yankee sense of humor, and one suspects that it was sadly controlled by his literary advisers. The code-word which he used for his cost marks is perhaps more characteristic of his turns of phrase than the book as a whole would suggest. While other merchants employed such respectable words as Republican or Perth Amboy (p. 128), Mr. Gould selected Backhouse, even though he had to add an x to stand for zero. There are some lively accounts of swapping and trading (pp. 1 ff., 43 ff.) which may be compared to similar stories in *Farmer Takes a Wife* (pp. 10 ff., 75 f.), and, what is closely allied, an appreciation of Maine liars (p. 63), a topic also handled by his nephew (pp. 82 ff.). One chapter (pp. 134 ff.) is devoted to "Queer Characters," none of whom equal Satchel-eye Dyer, but we are glad to observe that at the end Mr. Gould recognizes himself as one of the "damnedest characters in town."

The books already described are, as has been suggested, primarily for the export trade; the remaining volume was strictly for home consumption and therefore of greater significance as a picture of a community, in this case one in the process of coming into being. The book in question is a local history, and because local histories, being obscure and usually in small editions, are often overlooked by students of folklore and popular customs, it deserves more attention than the others, both for its intrinsic merit and its implications.

Although the second half of the nineteenth century saw the publication of many admirable histories of New England towns, no area was more fortunate in its local historians than the relatively small section of land lying between the rivers Passagassawakeag, which runs into Penobscot Bay at Belfast, and St. George's, which joins the Atlantic below Thomaston. For this region we have *A History of the Town of Union* (1851), by John L. Sibley, librarian of Harvard College and biographer of its graduates; *Annals of the Town of Warren* (2nd edition, 1877) and *History of Thomaston, Rockland, and South Thomaston* (1865), both by Cyrus Eaton, who compiled and composed under the joint afflictions of poverty and blindness; *Sketches of the History of the Town of Camden* (1859), by John L. Locke; *Annals of Belfast for Half a Century (1805-1855), by an Old Settler*, printed in the (Belfast) *Republican Journal* from January 1, 1874, to February 25, 1875, and unfortunately never published in book form, by William G. Crosby, twice governor of Maine; and the *History of the City of Belfast* (1877), by Joseph Williamson. These volumes all have in varying degrees the charm inherent in the anecdotal method, leisurely antiquarianism and local pride, and are all the more effective as portrayals of manners and trends because they deal closely and intimately with men and women who were for the most part completely unimportant except in their own communities during their own lives.

To the works already enumerated has now been added what is almost surely the last of the *genre*, Timothy W. Robinson's *History*



of *Morrill*, which owed its inception to the fact that in 1876 its author was asked by the Master of Honesty Grange, Patrons of Husbandry, to serve on a committee to furnish a condensed history of the town for the July 4th meeting of the grange. Mr. Robinson continued his researches into the history of the town until in 1887 he completed the manuscript which now appears in print.

Morrill, which contains the headwaters of the Passagassawakeag and St. George's rivers, was not settled until the last decade of the eighteenth century. Originally it was part of Greene Plantation, named after General Nathaniel Greene, and in 1813 the inhabitants of the easterly part petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts to be incorporated into a town under the name of Gilead. They received the incorporation, but because Gilead had been preempted were given the name of Belmont, presumably because the territory lay between Belfast and Montville. In 1855 a part of Belmont seceded and was named Morrill in honor of the current governor of the state. During the same year the town books of Belmont were burned and in consequence Mr. Robinson was forced to rely on tradition and gossip to an even greater extent than do most local historians.

Impersonal references to himself tell us that Mr. Robinson's father had settled in 1812, that his mother was the daughter of a pioneer of 1798, that he himself was a housebuilder and joiner, a director of an unsuccessful cheese factory, holder of town offices, and a farmer, who grew apples worth exhibiting and cultivated strawberries before those fruits were very common. Mr. Robinson, then, was highly typical of the active, ingenious, many-sided craftsmen and farmers, hard working and anxious to experiment, who were the backbone of the New England towns of his generation.

As a writer Mr. Robinson was more artless than the other local historians. His is not a bookish history, though he gives evidence of having consulted Williamson's *History of Belfast*, which he echoes at least twice. In general, however, he is his own man, and even when he attempts fancy writing he gives to it a characteristic turn: "Here the untutored Indian braves wooed their dusky mates; here they paddled their birch canoes and caught their fish; here they hunted the moose, the bear, and the deer, and rolled in the dirt" (p. 1). The *History* is divided into twenty-eight chapters of uneven length and merit, but almost all of them contain facts and stories of interest to readers who never before have heard of Morrill. A few samples will serve to suggest the nature of the material. One early settler believed himself and his family alone in the wilderness, but then heard roosters crowing not far away. With some of his children he spotted a path through the woods and found another family, which had considered itself equally isolated: "the woman was glad to see them, gave the children some bread and butter, and asked them to come again some other time; as that was Sabbath she could not entertain them on that day" (p. 2); with this account may be compared *Farmer Takes A Wife*, (pp. 35 ff.). There is an admirable picture of the early



houses and their construction (pp. 31-33), with a reference to the custom of "naming the frame," which is described at more length in Crosby's *Annals (Republican Journal, May 7, 1874)*.

Greene Plantation, originally in that part of the Waldo Patent which passed to General Knox, fell later into the hands of Benjamin Joy of Boston. There was the usual trouble between the settlers, or "squatters," and the agents of the proprietor, and some of the former disguised themselves as Indians to repel the latter. The resulting violence was called the Greene Indian War, during the course of which Belfast, whence the agents came, once flew to arms to repel a night attack which the "Indians" had never planned. The behavior of Belfast's citizen army during this comic-opera alarm was such as to invite the pen of a satirist, and Joseph Dolloff, the laureate of Greene, treated the affair in a poem stronger in ridicule and libel than in metrical beauties. Mr. Robinson quotes the "epic" (pp. 52-55), apparently taking it from Williamson's *History*. This event occurred in 1818; it was not until Maine became a state in 1820 that the titles were finally cleared on terms not disadvantageous to the "squatters."

The chapter on military history contains a lively picture of the trainings and musters (pp. 59-61), with their attendant festivities and plentiful liquid "patriotism." In the treatment of the Civil War (pp. 62-74), we find an emphasis on the role played by generous bonuses in filling Morrill's quotas of volunteers which might be taken to hint that Mr. Robinson belonged to that portion of the Democratic party which was not overly enthusiastic about the war, but it probably represents only a conscious effort to record all available facts. Indeed, Mr. Robinson's paragraph on the "Know-nothings" (p. 153) suggests that he was not wholly unsympathetic with the aspirations of those Native Americans.

The religious history of the town is treated at length (pp. 75-87), and we observe with fascination that in 1848 the Baptist sect was represented by three differing groups: Calvinist Baptists, Free-will Baptists, and Christian Baptists or Christian Order. There were also Methodists, Spiritualists and Millerites (p. 82). Morrill even had its own peculiar sect: "About 1836, Elder Joab Brown held meetings at the Mills, and a reformation. A number were converted and baptised, and formed into a church called the 'Christian Band,' consisting of seven members. This continued but a short time" (p. 76). Among the visiting preachers was "Arcelus Harding of Prospect, or Uncle Archy . . . He was a very peculiar man, and appeared to be very humble, often crawling under the benches, or rolling on the floor. Some thought he was insane" (p. 76). An even more original exhorter was a native son, John Cookson, Jr.:

He was subject of fits, so that it took all the men in the neighborhood to take care of him. Some times he would lay as dead as a log, at other he would bark and bite like a dog, or growl like a tiger, or halloo so loudly as to be heard for miles around. Sometimes it took all hands to hold him, and sometimes they could keep him still by reading the Bible, or by putting a knife over the door. At times he would preach, for he could preach as the

old man said his son could pray; who said his son could "pray like the Devil." He could turn his preaching into religious meetings, and the people would assemble to hear him preach, or out of curiosity, and then there would be big times. Sometimes he would lay as dead as a log, and would then get up and commence to preach, apparently asleep. He would preach to a congregation away in Canada, and they said could preach a regular reformation sermon. One evening someone stuck a pin in him; he did not mind it, but his wife said "Don't stick pins in him."

One time Nathaniel Cross and Ephraim Severance went out of the door in the evening, and said they "saw the devil." They must have known him or they would not have recognized him in the dark. They might have been mistaken, or excited. He had most of his times in the night. One night he got excited and went out through the top of the house and into the woods. The men had to run to catch him and take him back. Some folks thought his wife held some kind of mesmeric or clairvoyant influence over him, but the general opinion of him was that he was "bewitched" (pp. 143-144).

Since Mr. Robinson was at one time secretary of the Sons of Temperance, he naturally deplores the indulgence in hard liquors which was regular in the early decades of the century, and even those who survived the Prohibition era may well marvel at the quantities which our ancestors consumed on all occasions or without occasion. Weddings were celebrated with "at least ten gallons of rum or brandy," and once the minister from Belfast took so much that he could not remember all the service and finally had to say, "You may consider yourselves married and I will come out some other day and finish the ceremony." On his way back to Belfast "he was seen, his horse feeding on a hill by the roadside. Someone hailed him, 'What are you doing there, Priest?' 'Watering my horse, sir,' was the reply" (p. 88). Nor were funerals any more sober: "I have it from one that was there that at the funeral of one of our solid citizens keep in line of procession, yet it was not noticed in those times, the minister could not stand to preach without holding on by the side of the door, the bearers could not walk straight, or the times" (p. 89). Sheep-washing was a cold and wet task and traditionally accompanied by frequent potations, so much so that "When the temperance reform commenced, one Society allowed its members to take a little something to keep from taking cold when they washed the sheep, so one old deacon used to keep a sheep in the barn and used to wash her every day" (p. 116). But Morrill produced fervent foes of rum, such as "Uncle Billy" Farrow:

At a temperance meeting in Belfast, a temperance revival, Mr. Farrow was called upon to pray. "Uncle Billy" responded and prayed devoutly, for the "rum-seller" that the Lord might show him the evil of his ways, "that he might be led from his wicked ways to the path of righteousness and way of truth." "Show him the wickedness of his life that he may repent. Take him in hand, Lord. Shake him over Hell, shake him over Hell, Lord, and if he won't repent, why, let him slide" (p. 145).

If "Uncle Billy" was influenced by Jonathan Edwards, he added a grim gusto all his own.

For the social and economic historian the most interesting chapters are those on agricultural industries (pp. 106 ff.), mechanical industries (pp. 117 ff.), and occupations (pp. 125 ff.), and we are, as always, struck by the amazing self-sufficiency of these isolated towns. There are a few references to agricultural superstitions (pp. 110, 112), and the rather surprising statement that "Cattle, sheep, and pigs all had their tails cut off. Horses' tails were cut off and turned up over the back" (p. 135). A vivid picture of a corn husking must be given in full:

When the farmer got in his corn in the fall, he would have what is called an old fashioned corn husking. The farmer would invite his neighbors, the corn would be put in the barn and ranged the whole length of the floor. After arriving, at first the farmers would describe the different ways of agriculture, and tell the news of the day. One man would say "They are going to make a machine to thrash with, and to mow," but the query was "How can the machine be made to hold the flail, or the scythe?" Another would say "They are going to make vessels to go without sails, and carriages without horses." Some knowing one would speak up and say "It can't be done any more than a bird can fly without wings, or walk without feet." One old foggy said he "guessed it will be about the time General Jackson gets to be President." Another one said "They have got plows made of cast iron." "I will have one to plow my ground with," another said, but he was voted too fast, as they would only be fit to plow prairie, not stony land like ours. But now comes the man with the jug, two tumblers, and spoons, a dish of molasses, and some water. Then a large fat man commences and sings "The Cobbler," and other songs, and a dinky sings "Robinson Crusoe," and "Brave Wolf." The jug gets another turn, and some of the young fellows sing lively songs and tell funny stories. If a fellow finds a red ear he saves it so as to go on a "Mission," when the play commences.

In the house the women are discussing how the last quilt was quilted, and how the witches caught Ben C., out late one night, and got a bridle onto him and made a horse of him, and rode him to Kennebec and back in one night, then tied him to a tree and let him almost freeze. He was so badly used up that he could not get out of bed for three or four days.

By half past nine the corn would be husked, and a pile there would be of it, but the boys would clean up the floor and have a dance, then there would be a supper of baked beans, puddings, and pumpkin pies. Some of the boys would eat at both tables and make gluttons of themselves. Anybody that wanted to see the pile of corn would find the jug in the other room. Then there was a dance and a kissing party. At one party, after a while one man wanted to go home but his wife did not want to go. He got the baby and started but his wife caught hold of it to detain him, and each tried to see which would win, so much so that the baby died. That caused a sudden breaking up, but all pronounced it a good time, and made crooked paths for home. (pp. 107-108).

Another attractive section is that on wild beasts, birds and fish (pp. 157 ff.). We note that Mr. Robinson, like the other historians

of the region, contrasts the plenty of wild life at the time of the settlement with its absence or scarcity at the time of writing: "but wild beasts and game are among the things of the past, and, like the buffalo of the west, disappear as civilization advances" (p. 159). At the present time, thanks in some measure to wide-spread abandonment of farms, and in the case of deer, to a long closed season in the 1890's, game is relatively plentiful once more. Let us quote one last anecdote:

If a settler could catch a bear in the spring he was sure to have plenty of meat. Cookson caught one in a log trap, and which laid in it several days and got a little stale, but he said it made pretty good meat, even if it did smell a little (p. 158).<sup>1</sup>

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*The Folktale*, by Stith Thompson. The Dryden Press, New York, 1946. 510. \$6.00.

No study of traditional narrative forms or, indeed, of any category of folklore, is more formidable than that of the folktale. The old mythologies, the medieval and contemporary popular ballads, the riddle and the proverb are far more limited as objects of research than is the folktale. Comparative studies of the folktales of Europe, India and the Near-East are as old as comparative Indo-European linguistics and a fruit of the same tree. Contemporary types of European folktales were collected from oral tradition and known in literature from the end of the 17th century. Related forms, including close parallels to some modern types, are found in Egyptian papyri from the second millenium B.C., in Babylonian and Assyrian documents, in ancient Greek literature, in the great Sanskrit tale-collections of the first millenium A.D., in the later Persian and Arabic collections, and in the medieval European story-books.

The first serious attempt to trace the origin of the European folktale and to explain the cause of its variation was made by the brothers Grimm in the second edition of their *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* in 1819. Since then an enormous literature dealing with the folktale of Europe and the Orient has appeared, displaying a variety of research methods and many contradictory theories. In recent years the growing knowledge of related narrative forms in non-European spheres of culture, and the cognizance of the influence on the folktale of popular beliefs and elementary legends of different epochs and population strata, have made any consideration of the folktale an extremely complicated research process.

<sup>1</sup> Although Herbert G. Jones's *The Isles of Casco Bay in Fact and Fancy*, Portland, Maine: Jones Book Shop, 1946, came to the writer's notice too late to be included in this review, it contains many stories of interest to the student of American folklore. A number of passages may be cited here: ghosts and spirits, pp. 25-26, 89-91; miscellaneous superstitions, pp. 25, 91-92, 128; pirate treasures, pp. 24, 50, 52-55, 91, 94, 119-120; springs of longevity, 69-71, 76, 78.

In view of these facts, the noticeable absence of a handbook and master-guide to folktale studies has rendered general instruction, as well as any other work in this field, more difficult. The common academic procedure heretofore has been to use Aarne-Thompson, *The Types of the Folk-Tale*, Thompson's *Motif Index*, Bolte-Polívka's *Anmerkungen*, Feilberg's *Jydske Ordbog*, Köhler's *Aufsätze* and *Kleinere Schriften*, supplemented by various monographs. The only available works which attempted to set forth general outlines and methodology have been Aarne's *Leitfaden der vergleichenden Märchenforschung* and Krohn's *Die folkloristische Arbeitsmethode und Übersicht über einige Resultate der Märchenforschung*. These works, however, suffered from the necessary limitations of scholars who, although they knew the European tradition well, knew little of non-European sources and who adhered so strictly to the method and school of research which they had founded that they were bound to rather dogmatic views and to a narrow selection of material. The same, only more so, can be said of Wesselski's *Versuch einer Theorie des Märchens*.

Professor Thompson's present work, therefore, is the first to satisfy the need for a comprehensive account of all folktale research to date. It may well be regarded as a teacher's key to the many attempts and achievements in comparative studies of popular narration which have been made over a period of more than a century. At the same time, its thorough delineation of the domains of contemporary folktale studies, its scrutiny of proven theories and unproven theories, its survey of new methods and precise presentation of problems points the way to new inquiries and revaluations.

The volume is divided into four sections. In the introductory part a careful distinction is made, first, between various forms of oral and literary popular narration and, secondly, between the diverse significance and correct application of the great variety of popular and scholarly terms, mainly with reference to the tradition of the Old World, while the folktale proper (*Märchen, novella, animal tale, Schwank, etc.*) is placed in its proper historical and systematic order according to different categories of narrative elements. The second part of the book, "The folktale from Ireland to India", which forms the bulk of the material presented, describes in detail all essential tale-types of Europe and Western Asia and their reciprocal relationships. The same high standard of critical discrimination is continued in the third part, "The folktale in a primitive culture", which is devoted to a comparative study of the North-American Indian tale.

After presenting the factual material and making the reader familiar with the folktale in its main categories and varying forms, Professor Thompson discusses at greater length in the fourth section, "Studying the folktale", the schools of thought and theories which have hitherto dominated comparative folktale studies. Contrary to most authorities who have expressed final opinions concerning origin, meaning, distribution, and variation of the folktale, the author of the present book carefully avoids any preconceived or

immature judgments. He approaches the ready-made views of earlier and contemporary fellow scholars *sine ira et studio* and shows sound judgment as to how far their systems are applicable in view of what is known today. He has taken pains to let them tell their own stories in their own terms and to evaluate the lasting results of their studies. Nowhere in the scholarly literature of this vast subject is there a more representative and profound account of the four classical concepts of folk narrative: the old mythological school of the Grimms, Max Müller, de Gubernatis and Cox; the learned "Indian" school of Benfey and Cosquin with its emphasis on the literary tale; the "anthropological" school of Lang, Frazer and MacCulloch, which increases the scope of the problem to include traditions other than the purely Indo-European; and the Finnish school, which introduces the so-called historical-geographical method and comprises the first systematic attempt to analyze any given type into its components and thus to trace its origin in time and space, to establish its original source in a certain cultural era independently of the separate history of any other specimen in the long list of tale-types.

Professor Thompson's book is not only a history of folktale studies up to the present, but a program and guide for present and future research, as evidenced by the fact that a great deal of space is given to criticism of recent attempts at analysis and modern research techniques in the field of the folktale, including field-recording, problems of classification and preservation of field material. Previous studies of the folktale as a universal art have invariably stressed one or another principle, with the result that there have been contradictions and premature theories. Meanwhile, however, a long and faithful monographic research has been going on, the results of which, when once brought together, may reveal the history and true import of the folktale. This has now been attempted for the first time. This latest book of Professor Thompson must be seen against this background.

The first question that spontaneously comes to the reader's mind on opening the book, is the author's own position. Where, in the multitude of research matters and final opinions which are presented, does one find a detailed account of Professor Thompson's own investigations of individual tale-types and his personal views on the subject in general? No reader familiar with the literature, who reads the book with care, need be in doubt. Though perhaps some 1200 clearly distinguishable types of folktales have been recorded for the European area, there are about 700 types which are known in literature. The question as to how far these types form cycles with common origins and history or show any organic relationship to one another has never been fully investigated and has attracted but little attention among European folklorists. Professor Thompson has now taken a great step forward in answering these questions. In this very laborious process he made full use of all monographic and regional surveys which have been completed thus far, yet before the whole picture could be given comprehensively, many gaps had to be filled. Some 230 items of the complex fictitious and realistic tales current



in Europe and Western Asia have been discussed in the present book, and a goodly number of them have received here their first comparative treatment, for instance the tale-group "Children and Ogre" (Aarne-Thompson 327-328), "The Death in Person" (Aa.-Th. 330-335), "The Animal Brothers-in-Law" (Aa.-Th. 552) and related types, "The Skilful Brothers" (Aa.-Th. 653-654), "Strong John" (Aa.-Th. 650), "The Faithless Woman" (Aa.-Th. 315 and 590), "The Three Snake Leaves" (Aa.-Th. 612), "The Maiden Without Hands" and "The Three Golden Sons" (Aa.-Th. 706 and 707), "Snow White" and "The Wonder Child" (Aa.-Th. 709 and 708), "The Master Thief" (Aa.-Th. 1525), and others of the most representative types. Others which have been treated earlier but are thoroughly reconsidered here and put in their true light are, for instance, the Swan Maiden story as part of Aa.-Th. 313, 400 and 465, "The Grateful Dead" as part of Aa.-Th. 506-507, "The Search for the Lost Husband" ("Cupid and Psyche", etc., Aa.-Th. 425), the Cinderella types (Aa.-Th. 510 and 511), "Faithful John" (Aa.-Th. 516), "The Lazy Boy" (Aa.-Th. 675), "The Rich and the Poor Peasant" (Aa.-Th. 1535).

The author's exposition of all the well-known folktales in countries belonging to Western civilization and of the complexes they form gives a clear and rather detailed view of the individual types and their variations. It shows in more clear-cut fashion than any previous work the centers of distribution and the relation between oral and literary versions. It would be difficult to contradict the conclusion arrived at in each case. His observations on traditional style, particular features, and relative uniformity in the twelve sub-areas of folktale distribution in the Old World which he adheres to, offer new and fruitful viewpoints. Studies in the folktale tradition of Europe and the Near-East are more involved and require other methods than studies in the folktale tradition of other parts of the world. There is an historical depth to the European material which makes possible comparative historical as well as morphological and distributional studies. We have, for example, (1) the medieval folktale as it is known in the tradition which prevails today; (2) allied forms deriving from Classical antiquity and Old-Indian literature; and (3) an underlying stratum of archetypes. The latter are well exemplified in the old mythologies and, in fact, show much the same grouping of motifs as occur in some European folktales of a more recent time. Direct answers to the problems and many of the detailed questions arising from this stratification are given in the chapter on "The life history of a folktale". The author is more concerned, however, about individual tales and the main facts of their history than he is with matters of such general scope. An exhaustive synopsis of "origin and history of the complex tales" is to be found in the chapter bearing this title. In exceptional cases the author intends his statements as to the provenience of each one of the common European tales to be looked upon as presumptive, and in some instances there may be occasion in future discussions to raise objections to them. It has never been adequately proved that the Rhampsinitus tale—one of the most common in contemporary Euro-



pean tradition—really goes back to Herodotus or even earlier Greek literature. Professor Thompson's comprehensive survey of Ranke's elegant study of the two most common of all folktales, "The Dragon Slayer" and "The Two Brothers", adds much to the knowledge of their history, but the assertion that they both originated in Western Europe is not unquestionable. Otherwise, the author is very careful in adopting the results of former investigations, and he points to the fact that some dozen tales with world-wide distribution, such as "The Ogre's Heart in the Egg", "The Man on a Quest for his Lost Wife", and "Cinderella", present problems of investigation beyond present resources. In this connection it is worthy of note that Walter Anderson, who has carried out the most exhaustive and reliable studies ever made of any folktale, has restricted his choice of topics to tale-types which could be successfully studied by the historical-geographical method. There are, however, cases in which this method is doomed to failure, such as those European tales which are made up of several essential motifs whose antiquity precludes the possibility of studying them in historic terms involving centers of distribution.

Professor Thompson's reason for choosing the North American Indian tales in order to show "the folktale in a primitive culture" is twofold. The peoples of the Old World and the North American Indians have a large number of narrative motifs in common but in different typological settings. In both cases there is a distinct division into sub-areas, or, as a Scandinavian folklorist would say, into "oikotype regions". There is also the consideration that Professor Thompson is more familiar with the North American Indian field than any other student of the folktale. Nobody else enjoys the enviable position of knowing the stock of tales of the two continents equally well.

Undoubtedly there is much that Stith Thompson has learned from older masters in his own extensive field. His treatment of the oral tale is certainly influenced by the Finnish school, despite certain obvious disagreements concerning the range of the subject. These disagreements may be ascribed to the fact that Professor Thompson's knowledge in several respects is broader than that of any European expert. The fundamental difference between Professor Thompson's method of studying a folktale and that of his colleagues who adhere strictly to the Finnish school, lies in the different manner of handling the elements of the analyzed version of a tale. For Professor Thompson the separate motifs which combine to make a full-length tale are narratives in their own right and may well exist in the tradition independently of the tale-type in which they happen to occur. To Aarne, authoritative theorist of the Finnish school, every motif was originally part of a particular folktale type and was borrowed from this original tale for others. In his treatment of legendary material (*Sage*), which depends more or less on current popular beliefs, Professor Thompson may reflect Scandinavian scholars. He has, to be sure, done more than anyone else to bring systematic order to the discussion of this enormous body of popular narration, which

in its most archaic phases, is more closely connected with the folktale than is generally thought. But for all he is a man of letters. His knowledge of the totality of popular narration in the world's literature is probably unsurpassed. Through his painstaking studies in the medieval tale-literature and the old hero tale he has attained the leading place among contemporary folklorists. In his latest book he relates with clarity and elegance the kaleidoscopic history of what has now become a duly constituted science, and the indisputable facts it has established.

Sven Liljeblad

*Harvard University*

*What Happened to Mother Goose*, by Ray Wood. Privately printed, Raywood, Tex., 1946. Unnumbered pp.

*Southern Illinois Singing Games and Songs*, by David S. McIntosh. Privately printed, Carbondale, Ill., 1946. 49.

Students of folklore have marveled at the persistence with which children of each succeeding generation have gone on rhyming their playful way through childhood. To suit their whims, or to meet local, contemporary needs, they have adapted traditional rhymes such as those of Mother Goose, or invented fresh ones based on established formulas.

This special field of American folklore is well worth the attention it has received from Ray Wood. Some years ago his book, *The American Mother Goose*, brought together a rich collection of rhymes, jingles, games and finger plays recovered from his own memory or from the memory of others. Those items, evocative of frontier life and reflecting the philosophy of a people building a new country, had the tang of America. It was well-edited, and not the least of its charm came from the line drawings—one to each item—that caught both the essence and spirit of the rhymes.

Mr. Wood's current volume, *What Happened to Mother Goose*, suffers by comparison with *The American Mother Goose*. Its format is small with paper covers and an unattractive typography. Though there are perhaps too many items warmed over from Mr. Wood's previous works, my complaint is not concerned with Mr. Wood's material as with the manner in which he has put it together. One misses here the unity of *The American Mother Goose*. The editing betrays haste. Traditional rhymes and jingles of more recent origin are thrown together regardless of their subject matter or provenience, and with riddles scattered about to add to the disorder. Apparently Mr. Wood tried to be comprehensive but he has succeeded only in being diffusive. Several sets of rhymes in one part of the volume are repeated for no apparent reason in another. Nor does it help to leave the pages unnumbered. More illustrations would have enlivened the collection. This edition is limited to 150 copies, which may explain Mr. Wood's informal approach. But it cannot

justify casual editing. As one who liked Mr. Wood's *The American Mother Goose* I regret that the little volume under review is not a worthy companion to that work.

*Southern Illinois Singing Games and Songs* by David S. McIntosh is a collection of Anglo-American traditional material whose provenience is that part of Illinois known locally as "Egypt." Prof. McIntosh and associates collected this material from elderly informants in a limited area. Virtually all the songs and games are local versions of Anglo-American material found in other regions—such well-known games as "Buffalo Gals," "Chase the Squirrel," "King William," and "Old Dan Tucker," and such traditional songs as "Ten Little Indians," and "Froggie Went A-Courtin'." It is a well-edited little collection containing music for every song and game. Formation and figure terms are clearly explained. Each game has its directions. Published collections are cited for comparison.

A more attractive format and typography would have increased the practical value of this interesting little volume.

George Korson

Washington, D. C.

*Echoes from the North: A Collection of Legends, Yarns and Sagas*, by Willis N. Bugbee. The Willis N. Bugbee Company, Syracuse, N. Y., copyright 1946. vi, 168. 10 illustrations. \$2.00.

Willis N. Bugbee in his *Echoes from the North* recounts, apparently in his own words, what he describes in the Foreword as "legends, yarns and sagas . . . gathered from various sources." "Some," he informs the reader, "have been told again and again around the firesides of the French-Canadian habitants and the New-foundland fisher-folk, in the Eskimo huts and Indian tepees; others are tales woven around historical incidents and about the lives of the champions and heroes of the "great North." The presentation of the material is obviously designed to be popular; "it is a book that will be enjoyed by the whole family—young and old alike," says the blurb.

Bugbee's methodology will raise some serious objections in the mind of the folklorist who combines with his enthusiasm a scholarly conscientiousness.

In the first place, the sources of information are usually not specified either in the text or in the footnotes. Hence the reader has no idea when the author is recounting material collected directly from a folk-informant and when he is reworking secondary sources. Even in a popular account there seems to be no adequate justification for such vagueness; and it is after all a characteristic of the best journalism to be specific whenever possible. Thus, even a brief mention of the *Saga of Eric the Red* would surely enhance the author's retelling of the discovery of Vinland (pp. 141-149); and a description of an

informant can always be entertaining, as the author himself proves, in fact, by his chapter (pp. 102-107) on Sandy MacPherson, the Liveyere of Labrador.

The portrait of MacPherson, which includes a convincing sample of the Labradorian dialect," also reveals, by contrast with other chapters less faithful, how much a folklore narration may benefit when the collector reproduces the language of his informants verbatim. As instances of the opposite type of treatment, elegant periphrases such as "sought the realm of Morpheus" (p. 66) and "extracting the lacteal fluid" (p. 70) in a Newfoundland hunter's yarn are hardly appropriate or realistic.

A related objection to Bugbee's method will occur particularly to those who have been impressed by the cogency of the structural approach to anthropology (as illustrated, for instance, by Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*). It would, of course, be entirely unreasonable to demand of a folklorist, especially in a work intended for the general public, that he analyze the folk-culture with which he deals in terms such as an anthropologist might use in a technical monograph, but the folklorist unquestionably owes his readers a sketch of the relevant folkways of the people whose traditions he records. The lack of such information is, for instance, particularly regrettable in Bugbee's account (pp. 150-156) of the Greenland Eskimo folk-tale, about the surly giant who mortally wounded his wife with an impatient blow and was killed in revenge by his son, but not until many years later. The tone of the narration, typically Eskimo in its understatement, is artistically most effective, but the tale cannot convey the same meaning, cannot pose the same tragic conflict, to the casual reader that it would to a native audience unless he has been told that the punishment for crime among the Eskimos consists of inactive but highly feared social disapproval, in extreme cases followed by revenge, often long delayed, which falls as a duty upon the nearest relative. (See, for instance, Henry Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*, pp. 34-35; this collection of Greenland folklore, although published as long ago as 1875, is exemplary in the detailed nature of the introductory sketch.)

The fact that Bugbee's material is extremely heterogeneous may also seem disturbing, but by way of recompense that vast area, "the great North," provides a body of folklore sufficiently diverse in type and origin to entertain both the general reader and the folklorist. Noteworthy are the French-Canadian tale of the grateful beaver (pp. 6-12; Stith Thompson's Motifs B350, B360, B362, E341, E423, E610, M972); the French-Canadian werewolf tale (pp. 28-32; Motif D113.1.1 and an unrecorded counterpart to D702.1.1); the Labrador whaler's tall tale (pp. 112-113; an unrecorded variant of F911.4); and the Labrador Eskimo tale of the despised step-son (pp. 125-131; B217, B500, F628.1, L101, L111.3; markedly different from the Eskimo variants listed in Stith Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, p. 372 n. 185).

In conclusion, the reviewer notes the following corrections to

four misprints: *Acadians*, p. 87; *appetite*, p. 121; *nourishment*, *Tukalok*, p. 126; *could have been*, p. 167.

Charles W. Dunn

University College, Toronto

*A Treasury of Mexican Folkways*, by Frances Toor. Crown Publishers, New York, 1947. xxxii, 566. \$5.00.

*A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* is a book of 566 pages written and compiled by Frances Toor, a person who has spent twenty-five continuous years living in Mexico City. The book is superbly illustrated with 100 fine drawings by Carlos Mérida, and with 170 excellent action photographs.

It is obviously impossible for anyone to cover the entire folklore of a country of such diversified regions with such a wealth of material as Mexico; Frances Toor has attempted this, and has turned out a very interesting book, but one that of necessity must be sketchy. A separate book can be written on each of the topics contained in the book; in fact, on the subject of folk music alone, there are at least half a dozen studies that contain an extended treatment of this subject.

A book on folklore can be two things: It is either a collection, pure and simple, in which is contained as much primary material as the author has been able to compile, or it can be an analysis of the folk materials found in a given country or region. Oftentimes publications on folklore, while they contain interesting and authentic material, are very misleading. This is due largely to the limitations or interests of the author. It is a known fact that folklore will yield whatever the student or collector is after. The person who is primarily interested in or who has access only to Indian materials in Mexico will give the impression that Mexican folklore consists predominantly of indigenous traditions. Those who do not interest themselves in Mexico's autochthonous culture will likewise exclude such material from their studies and center their attention upon Hispanic Manifestations of Mexican culture. A thorough student of folklore must take into account the proper relations in the ethnology of Mexico in order to present the reader with a study and a collection of folk materials that truly represent this ethnological distribution. In this respect, *Mexican Folkways* is not as complete as might be desired.

Frances Toor divides her book into four parts, with the following captions: "Work and Worship," "Society—Custom—Fiesta," "Music—Verse—Dance," and "Myths—Tales—Miscellanea." At the onset she states, "For a better understanding of the folk with whose ways this book is concerned, it is necessary to know something of their past." This statement poses an interesting question: Who is the Mexican folk? Throughout the book the author refers to "the na-

tives," "primitive, homogeneous groups," "most progressive ones," "the majority of Mexicans," or "the folk." In reading the author's treatment of Mexican society, one finds these generalizations very misleading. There are portions of the book where Mexico's Hispanic culture, or the more important mestizo, are confused with the purely indigenous. A clear treatment of Mexican society, either progressively throughout the book or at the outset, would enable the reader to place the interesting manifestations of folk life with which the author deals. This does not mean that what Miss Toor presents is not authentic, but it can be very obscure to the average reader who knows nothing about Mexican society.

A minor point in the arrangement of material should be pointed out. Part I has several captions such as "Catholic Customs," "Pagan Ceremonies," etc., which could have been included in Part II, a section dealing almost exclusively with customs. Miss Toor had such a wealth of material to include in her study that some of these sections have a tendency to overlap. Perhaps one cannot object too much to the inconclusiveness of Mexican folkways, inasmuch as the author calls it a "Treasury." The reader who expects to learn about Mexican customs, and, at the same time, wishes to have a clear understanding of Mexican society, will find the former but not the latter. The Mexicans can be anyone from the Rio Grande to Yucatan, geographically, and anyone from a Spanish Mexican to a full-blooded Indian. In the same sentence, the author mentions the Tarascans of Michoacán and the Yaquis of Sonora. This rapid shift in location is likely to confuse those who do not have the map of Mexico clearly in their minds. Miss Toor is so familiar with her subject that she assumes to be talking at times to a public equally informed.

Some writers have portrayed the economic and social institutions of Mexico; others have written interesting and accurate accounts about village life. *Mexican Folkways* is a publication that, regardless of the arrangement of the materials, presents a greater wealth of authentic traditions, customs and folk life than has ever been placed within the covers of a single volume.

The plan followed in Part III, entitled "Music—Verse—Dance," is more logical and easier to follow. Here the author discusses pre-Spanish music in Mexico and dwells briefly on the introduction of European music with its resultant effects. The various types of Mexican folk songs are divided into primitive songs, religious songs, ballads, etc. The same treatment is given to the Mexican dances. The seventy-five pages of folk song and dance-tune selections in this section include some of the best numbers in Mexican folklore. In my opinion, this part of the book is the best written, and, had the rest of the work been given the same treatment, the whole project would have been greatly improved.

A person seeking information on Mexican folkways is sure to find at least a mention of it in Frances Toor's, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways*, which, as the name implies, is a compilation of material



dealing with all phases of Mexican folklore. She concentrates for the most part on the south central part of Mexico, presumably because the author has spent most of her time in that region. Mexican customs of northern Mexico are more Hispanic than they are Indian, and, therefore, present an entirely different picture. *Mexican Folkways* would be just as revealing to the inhabitants of the northern Mexican states as it would be to an American reader, because the traditions of indigenous southern Mexico are not a part of northern customs.

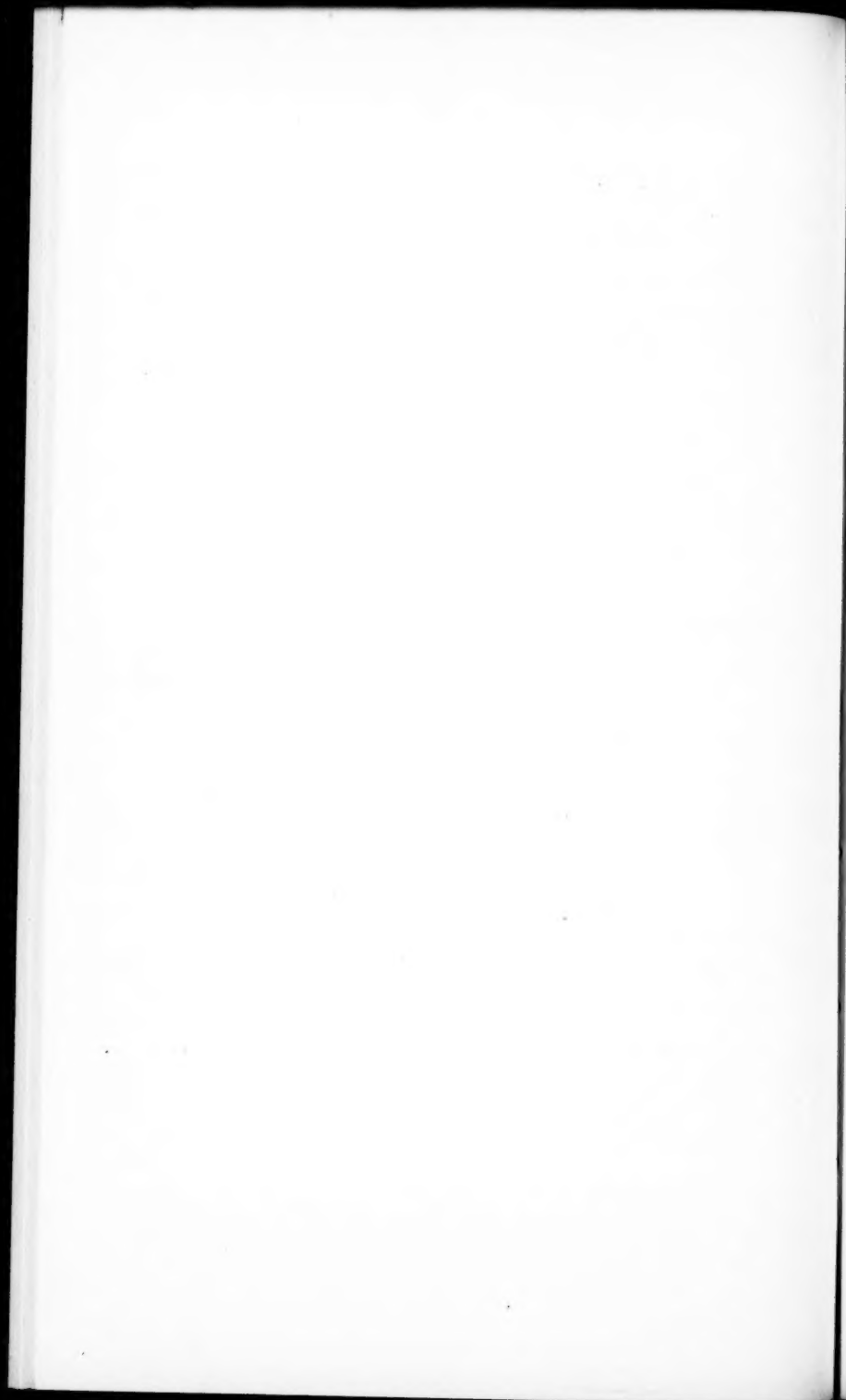
Despite the random treatment given to the kaleidoscope of Mexican traditions, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* presents a vast amount of authentic, interestingly written and well documented material. The book gives the impression that the author knows what she is talking about, and, furthermore, that she has a first hand acquaintance with her subject. The book is informative, and as complete as a study of this sort can be without running into volumes of detail. The selected bibliography indicates that Miss Toor is well acquainted with authoritative source material, both here and in Mexico. The Spanish book-titles should have been proofread a little more carefully. There are a number of misspellings which go beyond mere typographical errors.

In these days, when so much is written about Mexico by authors on vacation trips and by journalists on random sorties, it is very refreshing to read a book such as *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways*.

A. L. Campa

University of Denver





## FOLKLORE NEWS

*Library of Congress Announces Additional Albums of Folksongs.*—Duncan Emrich, Chief of the Folklore Section of the Library of Congress has announced through the Library's "Information Bulletin" some twenty-five projects in collecting, some recently completed and others currently active. In addition to adding to the wealth of material at the Folklore Archive, the projects will enable the Library to issue in the late fall of this year the following albums of folk music.

Folk Music of Venezuela, edited by Sr. Juan Liscano.

Afro-Bahian Religious Songs, edited by Melville J. and Frances Herskovits.

Songs and Ballads of the Anthracite Miners, edited by George Korson.

Songs of the Seneca of Coldspring Longhouse, edited by William N. Fenton.

Four Albums of Anglo-American Songs and Ballads, edited by Duncan B. M. Emrich.

Folk Music of Puerto Rico, edited by Richard A. Waterman.

Folk Music of Mexico and Guatemala, edited by Henrietta Yurchenco.

*International Folklore Congress.*—An International Folklore Congress will be held in Paris, July 12-13. The secretary of this Congress is M. André Varagnac (6 Rue du Pas-de-la-Mule, Paris, III, France) Conservateur au Musée des Antiquités Nationales and President of the Société Française de Folklore.

*Western Folklore Conference.*—The Western Folklore Conference will hold its seventh annual meeting on July 10-12, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado. Levette J. Davidson, Director of the Conference, has published the following program:

"Animal Tales of the West," J. Frank Dobie.

Current Research and Publication:

"Folksongs," Arthur L. Campa.

"Proverbs," Marjorie Kimmerle.

"Customs of Olden Times," F. M. Kercheville.

"Tales," Levette J. Davidson.

"Legend of Weeping Water," Louise Pound.

"Utah Traditions 1847-1947," Kate B. Carter.

"Western Singing School," N. L. McNeil.

"Western Songs and Ballads," N. L. McNeil.

**Folklore Organizations:**

"In the Southwest," T. M. Pearce.

"In the Americas," Ralph S. Boggs.

"In the Rockies," General Discussion.

"A Comparative Study of Some French Tales," Robert Allen.

"Gilpin County Stories of Baby Doe Tabor," Caroline Bancroft.

"Literary Versions of American Folk Materials," Ernest E. Leisy.

"Putting a Region into Books," J. Frank Dobie.

"Gallery Talk on Indian Art," Frederic H. Douglas.

"Gallery Talk on Historical Exhibits," LeRoy R. Hafen.

*Badger State Folklore Society.* — The Badger State Folklore Society was formally incorporated in March, by Dr. Jack Curvin, Dr. Clifford Lord, Helene Stratman-Thomas, John Jenkins, and Robert E. Gard. The Board of Directors of the State Historical Society voted to take in the new organization as an affiliate, and invited it to have its first meeting with the Historical Society at Manitowoc, August 21 to 23. Considerable interest in Wisconsin folklore has been aroused by the series of radio programs, "Wisconsin Yarns", initiated and directed by Robert B. Gard, Director of the Wisconsin Idea Theatre at the University of Wisconsin. These radio dramas, which have been presented weekly since January 1946, are based on historical traditions, popular legends and ballads belonging to Wisconsin lore.

*Michigan Folklore Society.* — The annual meeting of the Michigan Folklore Society was held on March 21 in the Rackham Building of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. President Ferdinand Galante introduced the speakers: Stuart A. Gallacher, Michigan State College, "Franklin's Way to Wealth: A Florilegium of Proverbs and Wise Sayings"; E. C. Beck, Central Michigan College of Education, "Weary Willie Ballads"; Martha Curtis, Michigan State Normal College, "The Black Bear and the White Tail Deer as Potent Factors in the Folklore of the Menomini Indians"; Florence G. Cassidy, Nationality Department, Council of Social Agencies of Metropolitan Detroit, "Folk Instruments in Michigan Communities"; Grace L. Ryan, Central Michigan College of Education, "Our Folk Dances in Michigan"; Aili Kolehmainen Johnson, "The Folklore and Folkways of a Co-operative Finnish Community, Rock, Michigan"; Richard M. Dorson, Michigan State College, "Occult Beliefs in the Upper Peninsula".

A discussion of an avenue for the publication of Michigan Folklore was led by Ivan H. Walton of the University of Michigan, Robert

E. Gard of the University of Wisconsin, and Lewis Beeson, the newly appointed Secretary of the Michigan Historical Commission, who stated his willingness to open the pages of *Michigan History* to folklore of the state.

Officers elected for 1947 are: President, Richard M. Dorson; Vice-President, Alice Nichols; Secretary, Aili Kolehmainen Johnson; Treasurer, Grace L. Engel.

*Illinois Folklore Society.* — The first meeting of the Illinois Folklore Society was held at Southern Illinois Normal University, Carbondale, on December 4, 1946. The following officers were elected: President, John W. Allen; Vice-President, David S. McIntosh; Secretary, Tina M. Goodwin; Editor, Jesse W. Harris.

*Texas Folklore Society.* — The thirty-first annual meeting of the Texas Folklore Society was held at Corpus Christi, April 18-19. The following papers were read: "Hunting Stories from the Tennessee Mountains," J. A. Rickard; "The Yellow Flower of Death," Gilbert McAllister; "Mexican Border Ballads," Brownie McNeil; "Texanisms," E. E. Mireles; "Voices in the Night," Rachel Bluntzer Herbert; "Nana Chita's Symptoms," Jovita Gonzalez Mireles; "Opening the Doors of the Church," Mody C. Boatright; "The Battle of the Sexes in British Ballads in Texas," Mabel Major. Mexican dances, *canciones rancheras*, and a boat trip around Corpus Christi Bay rounded out the program.

*Western Folklore.* — *The California Folklore Quarterly*, beginning with the January, 1947, issue, changed its title to *Western Folklore* and widened the geographical boundaries because the editors feel that there is much folklore of the West which should be published. Archer Taylor is now editor. The University of California Press is still publishing the journal for the California Folklore Society, and the numbering of the volumes will continue unbroken.

